FIGHTING BLOOD

H. C. WITWER

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F. B. O. Photoplay Series.

A SCENE FROM THE PHOTOPLAY.

"Fighting Blood."

FIGHTING BLOOD

BY

H. C WITWER

AUTHOR OF
THE LEATHER PUSHERS, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES
FROM THE F. B. O. PHOTOPLAY SERIES

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DEDICATED

TO

DR. HARRY WATSON MARTIN

MY FRIEND

H. C. W.

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FIGHTING BLOOD

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ROUND ONE

A PUNCH—AND JUDY

I REMEMBER the first look I took at the cubbyhole on the top floor just about wound matters up. The walls is papered terrible red, or maybe this rabbit hutch kind of blushed when the landlady called it a room. A faded rag carpet on the floor, a white-enameled cot like you get in the hospital, a chair not even fit to use as a weapon, a bureau which I bet come off the Ark, a picture of Theodore Roosevelt with the compliments of the New York "Blade," a cartoon of a vase of roses in a gilt frame, a window with a wide crack in the upper pane of glass—or else it was grinning at me: "Not so good, eh?"

Still, everything is as clean and neat as a new pin. But I can't sleep in a new pin. I'm looking for a out, when Mrs. Willcox, the kind of silvery-haired, sweet-faced old lady your grandmother was or is, takes things in hand.

"This here's seven and a half dollars a week with board—ahump—in advance," she says, and looks at me. I guess she must of heard me gulping. I had

eight dollars, even. "What did you say your name was?" she adds.

I ain't said nothing about my name, but I did now. "Gale Galen."

"Plannin' on stayin' in Drew City for a spell?" is the next question.

"That's up to Drew City," I says, telling the truth. "I——"

"What sort of business you in, Mister Galen?" she cuts me off.

The "Mister" tickled me. Why shouldn't it at seventeen? I bet the first time you was called "Mister" it tickled you too.

"The business I'm in right now, Mrs. Willcox," I says, "is looking for a job."

"Ahump!" says Mrs. Willcox, plenty suspicious.

I leave her to be that way, for the reasons that I have already made up my mind that I don't want no part of that two-by-four room for seven and a half or for nothing at all a week. Even if I am a poor fish, I am no sardine. I like plenty of parking space. So I kind of moved to the door.

"I don't think I want to take—eh—" I begin.

A door slams open downstairs with a bang, feet comes pattering up the two flights, a voice that made me snap out of it with a click calls: "Oh, mother!" and a minute later a million dollars' worth of girl yanks open the door, sees me, says, "Oh, I beg your pardon!" and blushes into *two* million dollars' worth of girl.

"Land sakes, Judy, can't you ever come into the

house 'thout bangin' the doors off?" says Mrs. Willcox, kind of peeved. Judy shakes a head of hair that must of enraged a lot of her girl friends and shows me all her nice white teeth. Me? I'm double cuckoo! I don't know what it's all about till Mrs. Willcox coughs and it wasn't from no cold. I reached in my pocket and handed over all but four bits of my bank roll.

"I'll take the room, Mrs. Willcox," I says, pushing the money into her hand. "Eh—I want to see some people here and—eh—what time is supper?"

"Dinner," says Judy, her eyes twinkling at me, "is at seven."

"I generally always exchange references," says Mrs. Willcox, looking at Judy and frowning a bit. "And ——"

"That's all right," I says from out in the hall. "You don't need to give *me* no references, Mrs. Willcox!" and then, before she could say some more, I took the air. I had to get a job. Less than a hour later I landed one as soda jerker in Ajariah Stubbs' "Cash Beats Credit!" drug store. Seven a.m. to 9.30 p.m. and very few laughs.

That was six years ago and maybe you think that's a lot of memorandum about nothing at all to remember that long. You wouldn't think so if you could of seen Judy—that's Judith Willcox. It ain't the slightest trouble for me to remember every detail in any ways connected with me meeting her. I'll remember *that* right up to the time they send for the embalmer! Yet I'm no memory shark. I forget plenty things, as some

of my many ex-bosses could tell you. They should—they told me. But certain things kind of stand out, things that I don't have to look back to, they're always as fresh and clear down to the smallest detail as if they happened yesterday. Like these—the time Dewey got rid of the Spanish navy at Manila Bay and I got rid of armfuls of special extras on a street corner in Boston, when I should of been in public school instead of being a studious pupil of nine summers in the School of Experience . . . the time I fell off a dock into the harbor at the mellow age of eleven and find out I can't swim . . . a operation for appendicitis . . . the pay envelope from my first job . . . the first time I seen Judy Willcox . . . but that's enough to give you a idea of what kind of things sticks in my mind. I remember Dewey's sensational win because I get a nickel apiece that morning for penny papers, the flop into the harbor for the reasons that a cop pulled me out and gets both our pictures in the paper, the operation because I didn't have appendicitis, the pay envelope because I lose it, and the first time I seen Judy Willcox because she knocks me so dizzy I rush out of her mother's boarding house without any hat and had to buy another one with my last half dollar, on the account I'm afraid I can't get a job bareheaded.

Well, anyways, after a year I'm still on the wrong side of the counter, mixing a mean ice cream soda and shaking a wicked egg phosphate for old Ajariah Stubbs. I was clicking off twelve bucks the week and I had plenty responsibilities—I deliver in a flivver, prescriptions and ice cream. But I'd made up my

mind I wasn't going to spend the rest of my life behind no soda fountain. I didn't do all my dreaming at night and I was determined that some day I was going to *mean* something.

What brings me to Drew City, in the first place, is the Jersey Central Railroad and a desire to see Jack Reynolds, which jerks soda with me in Boston before he goes back to his home town, this village thirty-eight miles from New York where even the circus only stops for a day. Jack's real trade is being a advance agent for carnivals, and between seasons why, he puts on a white coat and apron and slings soda.

You'd be surprised at some of the fellows you run across in the soda-dispensing game. While I was in it, I worked side by side with actors, chorus men, song writers, press agents, scrappers, fellows working their ways through college, ex-bartenders, etc. and etc., all, except the ex-bartenders, waiting for something to turn up in their own line. You know in the big towns a first-class soda jerk can knock off eighteen to twenty bucks a week and a good head soda man which can also mix syrups can ask and get twenty-five to thirty. Plenty of milk-fed private secretaries and law clerks gets far less.

Aside from the fly-by-nights, which only goes behind a fountain while waiting for a chance to do their real trick, there's thousands of fellows has made a first-class trade out of jerking soda. And to get the important money you got to know a whole lot more about the calling than just being able to put on a white coat and apron and saying: "Get your checks

from the cashier, please!" Oh, my, yes! If you don't think so, try and get a job on a first-class fountain in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago, and hamlets of that size. You get put through a examination that would make Edison's foolish questions sound like a kindergarten test and you got to be well heeled with references, don't think you don't.

You can tell a big league head soda jerk by the way he picks up a glass, but the acid test is what kind of chocolate syrup he can make in the summer and what kind of tomato bouillon he can throw together in the winter when hot drinks gets the call at the fountain. Plenty flavors can be bought in bulk, but no first-class fountain buys tailor-made *chocolate*. The most popular flavor of 'em all is always made personally by the head soda man and he takes as much pride in his chocolate as Dempsey does in his right hook. He says it with chocolate and he composes a mean syrup. You bother him when he's making up a batch and good-bye job! Fountains is made or broke amongst soda jerks by their chocolate syrup and making it right is a sure enough gift.

Well, when I get to Drew City, Jack Reynolds has gone away a week before with some carnival, so my chances of busting head first into the theatrical business is all shot to pieces. I ain't got enough jack to get back to Boston, and New York frightens me in the short view I get of it changing trains. I don't even know a street address there and it looks so big and cold-hearted—everything and everybody rushing and tearing along with a kind of wild, worried look on

their faces—well, it scares me stiff, no fooling! Then, like I said, along comes Judy Willcox, and I hang my hat up in Drew City and call it home.

At first I don't make the headway with Judy that I'd like to, and that's a fact. She was sixteen when I hit Drew City and on her seventeenth birthday I gave her a gold-banded fountain pen with her initials on it. Judy got a total of nine presents for that birthday. Five of 'em was gold-banded fountain pens and I wish now I had gave her my present in cash and she could of got something she really needed—probably fountain pen ink.

Anyways I made myself a lot of friends among the fellows and girls that went to Drew City Prep and come in the drug store every afternoon for their sodas and sundaes. I went to work and invented a drink called Drew City Surprise, and the gang went crazy about it. It had everything in it but the kitchen stove and we got twenty cents a copy for it. I had a terrible battle with the boss the first time I paste up the sign on the mirror back of the fountain. He claims they ain't nobody living will pay twenty cents for no soda fountain drink, unless I put a dime in each and every glass, but I says if I can get them to try a Drew City Surprise they will pay twenty cents or even more for it, for the reasons that it's something new and a bit different from plain ordinary soda fountain drinks. Then again, the high price will make 'em think it *must* be good and the fellows will want to show off in front of their girls so they'll order it.

Well, I am right and old Ajariah smiles for about

the first time since he found a dollar bill wedged under the cash-register drawer when he bought the store. He says I ought to be a salesman, and maybe next year he'll put me on the drug counter, where the patent medicines and the 85 per cent profits is. But I can't get him to try a "Drew City Surprise" himself, because he says he has watched me and I never make it the same way twice and that's a fact, for I forget how I make it the first time. Still and all, they's no complaints from nobody, so why worry?

After you leave Drew City Prep you go either to Princeton or to work, according to how is things with your people. But outside of Judy Willcox, most of the gang that come in the drug store belongs to families as rich as a custard, and they all go to some swell college the same as their fathers and mothers done before them, just like I went to work the same day as my fathers and mothers done before me. The routine is a little different on the account everybody is equal at birth when it don't mean nothing, but if they was all equal at around seventeen, why, it would mean plenty! In that case I would of been going to this Drew City Prep and getting my three squares a day, too, instead of jerking soda for Ajariah Stubbs so's in the order to eat and depending on what I can remember of this and that to get a education.

Among the first friends I make in Drew City is Rutledge Spencer-Brock, a regular guy even if his name does sound like two collars and a Pullman car. His old man is down to his last twenty million, and some day Spence will be left about everything but

Niagara Falls and South Dakota, but he don't put on no dog with me in spite of that. He's about as old as me, but taller and thinner and one swell-looking fellow. Most of these flappers was just wild about him, and why shouldn't they be wild over a baby like that, which can't miss being a millionaire and just about owns this Drew City Prep? He was pitcher on the baseball team, quarter-back and captain of the football team, and the same week I arrived in Drew City he goes to work and takes over the interscholastic record for the dash of 440 yards. Likewise, he's a dancing fool and throats a cruel tenor—which makes him about perfect from the girls' standpoint, hey?

Anyhow, me and Spence gets along like the Two Orphans. He had a elegant racing car, and we burn up the State road to Trenton in that sweet running boat many's the time. We go duck shooting and fishing and like that together and the first Sunday I was off we both sneaked over to New York and went to this Coney Island. Some joint! We ride on everything in the place from the merry-go-round to the shoot-the-shoots and act like a pair of ten-year-old kids in the toy department the week before Xmas. Some of the things, like the roller coaster and the Dizzy Dip, why, we stay on a dozen times. I had eleven bucks saved up for a suit and that lasted about as long as a leaf of cabbage would last at a rabbits' convention. Money and me is easy separated, and that's a fact! While Spence is in a cigar store phoning his mother where he is, I blowed two of the last three of my eleven bucks taking a bunch of dirty-faced kids

around on the scenic railway. Them kids is hanging around watching it like it is a ham bone and they are all collies, and every now and then they get chased away by the guy running the thing.

Well, after a while I can't stand looking at them, so I took the whole mob for a ride and be done with it!

When Spence came out of the cigar store he bets me five bucks he can wallop a punching-bag machine harder than I can. So he hauls off and hits this bag and the dial registers 1,150. Then I stepped back and slammed it as hard as I could and the arrow points to 2,025, and Spence says the machine must be out of order. So we punch it again and this time Spence hits 1,475 and hurts his hand and I hit 2,625 and hurt his bank roll, as he immediately hands over the five bucks with a grin, remarking that he would hate to get into a fight with me. Well, I wouldn't get in no fight with him no matter what he done, because he is aces with me. But I would fight for Spence in a minute, don't think I wouldn't!

But to get to the point, I guess I will always look back on the next day as one of the most exciting days I ever had in my life. It's a big day for Drew City likewise, because Knockout Kelly, the welter-weight, comes down there the day before to train for his fight with Jackie Frayne in New York. The bunch stops in on their ways to school the following morning and all the fellows is talking about going out in the afternoon to Knockout Kelly's camp and watch him do his stuff.

Spence begs me to come out with him, so I ask old Ajariah can I have the day off and I won't take my

regular day next week. But they is nothing stirring! Ajariah says he can't let me get away on the account he's going out to look at a sheriff's sale. Where he went was out to Knockout Kelly's training camp, because Spence seen him there and told me.

Why Ajariah Stubbs should be so keen about boxing I don't know, unless it's because he's about fifteen years older than the Rocky Mountains and will soon be meeting the busiest boxer of 'em all—the undertaker.

Well, Judy Willcox comes in with the rest of the gang that day and gives me a smile which cost Ajariah Stubbs exactly three cents because I drop a glass as the result. Judy has just went to work and had her hair bobbed off, and she asks me how do I like it, taking off her hat and flopping the hair around to show me. But whenever I see her face, why, that's all I can look at, and she could of had a basket of eggs on her head and I wouldn't of knew it. I'm looking into the bluest and shineyest eyes I ever seen or want to and I'm kind of trembling like I done when I first seen her, and like I always do when I see her since. Then a nasty voice says:

"Come on, snap out of it—do your sleeping at night! Two orange phosphates."

This is a guy called Maurice Dempster, and he's carrying Judy's books for her, the big stiff! His old man owned the carpet factory here, which seems to make this fathead think he's the duck's quack. We like each other the same way a rat loves a ferret and the fact that he's stuck on Judy don't make me want

to kiss him every time I run across him either. I don't know how Judy could ever see this baby, with his fat face and beady little eyes, which is still beady even when he laughs.

"Oh, don't be so cranky, Rags, you're like an old bear!" says Judy, and she don't seem to like this dumbbell hollering at me. "Besides I don't want an orange phosphate, I want a chocolate fudge sundae."

"I should say not!" says Rags, like he's her father. They call him "Rags" on the account of his old man's carpet mill. "I should say not! It's too soon after your breakfast. Hurry up with those phosphates, will you?"

"Be yourself and quit that hollering!" I says, laying a chocolate fudge sundae and a exceedingly bitter orange phosphate down in front of 'em.

"Can't you understand English?" snorts Rags. "I didn't order a sundae, I said two——"

"Well, I ordered a sundae," butts in Judy, dipping her spoon in this rich goo and rolling her eyes up at the ceiling. "This is perfectly heavenly!" she says. So is she!

Rags gets red in the face and Judy catches him in the mirror back of the fountain and she winks and laughs. Acting like he's worried about something, Rags gives me a horrible look.

"Thirty cents, please!" I says to him.

He begins going through his pockets and his face is now the color of a ripe tomato. "I—eh—I've only got—I find I have only twenty cents with me," he stutters, glaring at me. "That would have been enough

for the two orange phosphates I ordered. I don't see why I should have to pay for your stupidity—you misunderstood my order and——"

Judy laughs and opens her purse.

"Oh, I'll pay for my own luxuries," she says, slapping a dime on the counter besides Rags's two. Just to make Rags feel bad, I rung it up. Imagine a guy with a carpet mill in his family taking a girl in a drug store for a drink and then having to borrow the money from her to pay the bill!

Rags is fit to be tied and he gulps down his phosphate and jumps off the stool. His face is all screwed up in a knot and I don't blame him, as I put plenty phosphate into his glass! Then he growls at Judy to hurry up or they'll be late.

"I'm going to report you to Mr. Stubbs!" he snarls at me.

"Do that!" I says politely, polishing up back of the fountain.

"If you do any such thing, Rags," says Judy, very cold, getting up and wiping her wonderful lips with the paper napkin I give her—"if you do any such thing, I'll have nothing further to do with you!"

"Laugh that off!" I says to Rags—and make a enemy for life.

Judy comes in by herself again after school in the afternoon and they ain't nobody in the store but me. The boys is all out at Knockout Kelly's camp, and the girls is busy getting their costumes ready for a masquerade that Stella Armitage, Spence's girl friend, is giving the next night. Judy orders up a chocolate

fudge sundae, and while I am going out of my way to make this the greatest sundae ever placed in a dish, I happen to look at her books which she has laid on the counter. Most of 'em is Latin, Greek, and French and I am thinking I only wish I had a chance to study them languages and maybe get away from the soda business and not be no dumbbell *all my life*.

But I am having plenty trouble with the *English* language then, as far as that part of it goes! That's what gets me sore when I think things over, like I do now and then when I ain't thinking of Judy and how much chocolate syrup I got on hand and will I ever get any more than twelve bucks a week. I think suppose I did get a crack at a job with some kind of a future in it right then—what good would that do me when, as far as education is concerned, I don't know what it's all about?

They must be *something* I can do which will get me further than jerking soda will, I think, but how am I ever going to find out what that something *is*, with the schooling *I* got? They may be a big league lawyer, or a first class doctor, or a world beating business man in me somewheres, but how can I bring that out when I have got to stick back of this fountain or else see how long can I fast? There ought to be *some* way of guys like me getting a crack at things. I bet there's lots of rich fellows in college which don't give a dam what they do after their four years is up. Well I'd of give a leg for even *one* year at college and I bet when I come out I'd of did a whole lot more than just go to the annual football games, and that's a fact!

Anyway I slapped a dollar's worth of whipped cream on the top of this chocolate fudge sundae and put it in front of Judy, and then I notice she's watching me, with a queer look on her pretty face.

"Gale," she says, "do you ever think about your future?"

Now, ain't that funny, when that's just what I *been* thinking about?

"Sure!" I says. "I think *my* future is all behind me."

"No—I'm serious," says Judy. "And this whipped cream is delicious! What did you do before you came to Drew City, or is that too personal?"

"Not at all, Judy," I says. "It ain't often I get a chance to—well, get this kind of stuff off my chest. They is nothing very exciting in my life's history, so far. I was born of poor but American parents and I begin earning my keep at about eight—in the morning and of age. I've sold papers, split bobbins in a cotton mill, been a errand boy, printer's devil, and took out orders for a butcher—that being about the only time I actually delivered the goods!"

"But when did you go to school?" asks Judy.

"Before I got into the newspaper business—selling 'em," I says.

"And that was when you were only eight years old?" she asks, and her eyes gets wider.

I nods.

"Well," says Judy, very severe, "I think you must have been a very, very bad little boy to stay away from school just to sell newspapers for a few pennies!"

"Judy," I says, "I would of been a very, very *thin* little boy if I hadn't of stayed away from school to sell newspapers. We got so crazy about *food* in our family that we just had to have some every day or we wouldn't play!"

Judy stops eating that swell sundae and gives me a long look. Then she nods her head and sighs.

"I—I understand, now," she says, kind of soft. "Oh—that's criminal!"

"Well, Judy," I says, "they's plenty fellows like me, as far as that part of it goes. And then, again, *somebody* has got to be soda jerkers, I guess—eh—" I am trying to laugh matters off.

"Surely, Gale, you don't expect to be a soda clerk *all* your life?" she cuts in on me. The sundae is melting away.

"No, Judy, I don't!" I says slowly, sitting on the ice-cream tank back of the counter. "For one thing, I'd have a hard time shaking up malted milks when I got to be eighty-five, and for another thing, Judy, I'm going to *get* somewhere! Right now I ain't got no more idea than a baby of what I'm going to be. I'm busy now *living* . . . some job for *us* guys. But I ain't going to just sit back and moan because I fail to get born in a mint, like Rags Dempster and that bunch. I got too much fighting blood in me to moan, Judy! I'm going to get me a education. I'm going to get *that* by hook or crook! I got to get some trick which will keep me alive while I'm plowing through books like you got there and trying to understand what they mean. Say—yesterday they was a lot of them

rich guys from the golf club in here and they're talking about the new locker room they're putting in. Each one of them babies is socked for a thousand apiece—nothing at all to *them*. Why, I'd live a year on a thousand bucks, and I could go to some snappy school like you do, too! Well, I'll get the thousand, or——"

"Honestly, of course!" butts in Judy, as serious as if she's forty instead of seventeen. But then girls is always older than their actual age, ain't they?

"Do I look crooked?" I grins.

Judy laughs and shakes her head. "Well, I must go," she says. "This has been awfully interesting, hasn't it?" Then, like she just thought of it, she says: "Oh—you know that Stella Armitage's masquerade dance is to-morrow night?"

"I hear them all talking about it—yes," I says, kind of surprised. "But what does that mean to me?"

This is one of the very few times I ever see Judy act timid and shy.

"Well—well, the girls are to choose their own escorts and——"

"And you're going with Rags Dempster!" I finishes for her, kicking a empty fruit can the length of the fountain.

"I am not!" says Judy, straightening her hat in the mirror. "I'm going with you! Are these caramels fresh?"

What do I care about caramels? I am around the counter in a jump!

"Is that level—you mean that, Judy?" I holler.

"Of course!" laughs Judy, moving to the door.

"You mustn't get so excited. I'm going to be an Oriental dancer, but don't tell any of the crowd if they come in here to-day. What are *you* going to be?"

"I think *I'll* go as a soda dispenser!" I says, still in a trance from her asking me at all. "Or else I'll empty a bowl of whipped cream on my head and pretend I'm a nut sundae. I—eh—don't worry about that part of it, Judy, I'll dig up *some* kind of a layout. But, say, listen—are you just asking me to go with you so's to steam Rags Dempster up?"

"If you think so, don't come!" snaps Judy. Then she's laughing at me again. "However, Mr. Gale Galen, if you decide that you can condescend to accompany me, we should be at Stella's about half past eight."

"But listen, Judy, you——"

A wave of her hand, a slammed door and she's gone. It's just Ajariah Stubbs's drug store again and I am just a soda jerk. Both me and the store seemed something entirely different when she was in there!

Well, the next thing is can I get off the night of the party and also where am I going to get me a costume for this masquerade, in twenty-four hours' notice? I got brains enough to know that this ain't simply a case of putting paint on your face and wearing girl's clothes, like the kids does on Hollow Eve. Stella Armitage's house is bigger than the library, which it looks a whole lot like from the outside, and they're the only ones in Drew City which has what is called Jap house boys. Likewise, they got two chauffeurs and a imported butler and pay a fearful income tax. Still,

Stella and me and Spence has often kidded together at the fountain and Stella's never let her people's money tie up conversation as far as I'm concerned.

That night when I come back from supper, or "dinner," as Judy nicknames it, I ask Ajariah can I get off the following evening at seven instead of half past nine, and after plenty hemming and hawing he says yes. Having got that all settled, why, the next thing is what am I going to wear to the masquerade? I call up my pal, Spence, and he says he's got a extry devil's suit and he'll let me borrow it, because he's going as a pirate.

So a few minutes before I lock up the store, Spence brings down the devil's suit and it is certainly a swell costume. But when we come to trying it on me downstairs in the stock room, why, the only thing fits me is the mask on the account I am broader across the shoulders than Spence. So the devil's suit is out and it looks like *I'll* be out too, unless I can scrape some kind of a costume together. Well, while we're standing there trying to figure some kind of a disguise for me, I am looking around the stock room when I see something that gives me a big idea. I slap my hands together and tell Spence to go on home, because I have got my costume and I'm all set.

That's all I would tell him and he immediately hollers his head off, because he says he has told me what *he's* going to be dressed like and I'm holding out on him. So then I told him that unless I am very much mistaken I am going as a clown and does he think that will be O. K.? Spence says he didn't see

why not, for the reasons that they will certainly be at least *one* more clown there if Rags Dempster goes, whether Rags is *dressed* that way or not.

After Spence goes home I lock up the store and take a pair of scissors from the surgical-goods case, a couple of spools of thread and a package of needles. Then I go down in the stock room and wrap up a armful of cheese-cloth which we use to strain syrups with and a jar of carmine coloring extract which we use to make fresh strawberry flavor with. The cheese-cloth and the carmine is the things which I happened to see in the stock room and which give me the idea for me masquerade suit. I took 'em all home with me and I sit up cutting, painting, and sewing this here cheese-cloth till six o-clock in the morning, but by that time I have got a classy disguise in the shape of a clown's costume.

It was one tough job and I'm all in by the time I've tried this cheesecloth on me for the sixty-ninth and last time. I got carmine coloring all over my hands and then there is some which I got to scrub off the floor. I have rammed that needle in my fingers all night long and I'm so sleepy that it's nearly more than I can do to keep my eyes open. Yet with all that I feel perfect, because I am going to take Judy to this swell racket and I have got a bear of a costume and to ask more would be ridiculous.

Well it is almost six o'clock when I get done tailoring and I have got to open up the store at seven. I can see there is no use of me going to bed at all, so I sneak downstairs and tore off a cold bath and let it go at that.

Judy don't have to get up as early as I do and I don't see her at breakfast, but Mrs. Willcox, which has been the same as a mother to me, claims I got rings under my eyes and look terrible. She insists on me taking a swallow of cod liver oil before sitting down to the table and it makes me as sick as a dog and all I can eat is a cup of coffee.

I certainly burnt Ajariah Stubbs up that day and that's a fact. A couple of times I fell asleep behind the fountain and I give a guy pepsin bismuth and a stiff argument, when all he says he asked for was a plain chocolate soda. By dousing my head in cold water in the syrup room and drinking a couple dollars' worth of bromo-seltzer, why, I managed to keep awake till four o'clock, when Judy calls me up and what she told me kept me awake for the rest of the day without no trouble at all!

The minute I hear Judy's voice I know something's up.

"Gale," she says, "please don't be angry with me—but—but I can't go to Stella's with you to-night!"

"Why, what's the matter, Judy?" I says, kind of scared. "Are you sick?"

"No—*I'm* all right, Gale," she says, still in that funny voice. "It's—it's—Gale, this is very unpleasant and I may as well get it over with at once! Stella—Stella doesn't want you to come, and I think she's horrid, and if I hadn't gone to such trouble about my costume, I wouldn't go either!"

I come near swooning away in a faint right in that phone booth! I feel like yesterday I see in the papers

where I have been left a million bucks and this morning I read where it's April Fool. Here I have sit up all night long and—well, what's the use! Knocking around since I been a kid has made me a pretty hard-boiled egg, but they's a lump in my throat when Judy's "Hello, hello—are you there, Gale?" brings me back to life.

"What got her sore at me?" I says finally. "Stella Armitage was in here only a couple of days ago and we're kidding about this and that. Why——"

"Yes, and she'll probably be in there again doing the same thing, and that's why I hate her!" says Judy. "Oh, don't think I didn't give her a piece of my mind, Gale. As if it should make any difference what you are—eh—I mean, when we've all been so friendly. It isn't as if you were just an ordinary, everyday soda clerk that none of us knew—eh—or"

Judy rattles along kind of nervous, but I miss quite a lot of what she's saying. I feel sick, no fooling! I know what's the matter now and why this Stella Armitage declares me out of her party. Stella Armitage is Stella Armitage, and I'm just a soda jerk which blew in from nobody knows. The kidding at the fountain is one thing; inviting me to her house is something entirely different. Right away I see where I fit in with this gang—nowheres! A lot of other plans I had made blows up with the one of going to the masquerade and the first time Judy stops for breath I says I hope she has a swell time and goodby.

Then I get red-headed.

I ain't good enough to be asked to this Armitage

Jane's house, hey? Well,—I swear to myself that the day will come when she'll be tickled silly to have me, or even to say she *knew* me! I'm good enough for Judy Willcox and Spence—and then I begin to wonder what Spence thinks about me being gave the air. Stella's his girl and he means more than she does in the town. He's been palling around with me, too, and of course he knows I expected to go to this party. Well, I get the idea that maybe he's also laughed me off.

I went down in the stock room, where I had hung up my clown's layout to let the carmine dry, and they ain't nobody in no hospital nowheres feels half so bad as I do! I look at this here masquerade costume, which half a hour ago seems very nifty to me, and now it's just a lot of cheesecloth, which I have went to work and ruined by dabbing it with carmine. I think of how I sit on the side of my bed all night when I can hardly keep awake, jabbing that needle into my fingers and attempting to learn the mysteries of sewing at a minute's notice. I think of how I kept trying it on and taking it off, and taking it off and trying it on, and—well, I make a wild grab at that clown's costume and I rip it to shreds, and that kind of eases my feelings a little, anyways!

When I go back to the fountain I begin polishing up, and a guy can do a great deal of first-class thinking when he's polishing something, if he ain't one of them whistlers or hummers. What I mean is, did you ever notice how some people, mostly women, will keep humming or whistling when they're polishing and dusting

and the etc.? Then they's others which kind of goes off in a trance when they get a polishing rag and a silver bowl or the like in their hands, and, while they are putting a shine on it, why, they will do all their thinking for the week.

Well, while I am making the nickel plate look like a mirror, I am thinking that ten or fifteen years from then I will come back to Drew City in a Pullman called "Fauntleroy," or something classy like that, and the whole burg will be at the station to meet me, waving flags and hollering "Hurray for Gale Galen, our new, rich, and popular governor!" After I make a few speeches and shake hands with one and all, I will order Stella Armitage's big white house tore down for some legal reasons, and, of course, Rags Dempster will be in jail by that time, and I will haughtily refuse to turn him loose. Then I will give Mrs. Willcox something like a million and make Drew City the capital of New Jersey; but me and Judy will put the governor's mansion on Riverside Drive, New York. Old Ajariah Stubbs will be going around throwing out his chest and saying: "Why, that boy *worked* for me once, and look at him now!"

By this time it's six o'clock, and I made up my mind that as long as I ain't going to the masquerade party I won't take the night off, as what is there for me to do with it? If I had only knew the various things which was going to happen to me! Anyhow, I tell old Ajariah that I am going to get my supper and then I will come back and work. This tickles him silly, on the account it gives him the chance to go down to Kale

Yackley's cigar store and play checkers with Judge Tuckerman all night. They gamble for ten cents a game, but you would never think there was that amount at stake if you watched 'em. You'd think they was betting each other five thousand dollars on each and every move.

I don't go home for supper, because I don't want to run into Judy, who'll probably be all dressed up for the party, and that would only get me feeling bad again. So I had some ham and beans and coffee in Red Fisher's Palace Eating House, and come right back to the store. Then the excitement begins! Ajariah is at the phone, and when he hangs up he looks at his watch and says: "Seems to me like you go clear to Trenton for your meals. Hump yourself now and git out this here order!"

With that he hands me a slip of paper, and when I say that you could of took that paper to a Chinese laundry and got your collars out with it, why, you will get a idea of how Ajariah writes. But finally I make out: "I gallon vanilla, I gallon chocolate, I gallon orange ice."

"Where's it go?" I says, starting out for the flivver.

"Up to Armitage's," says Ajariah. "Must be carryin's on there to-night!"

Hot coffee!

I like to fall through a show case. Imagine asking me to take this ice cream around to the back door of Stella Armitage's house, right while this masquerade's going on. To be flagged from the party itself and then made to deliver their refreshments to the kitchen! Sup-

pose Judy sees me—or this cuckoo, Rags Dempster? It ain't enough to make a tramp out of me by canceling my invitation, but I got to be made a fool of like this in front of a girl I'm crazy about and a guy that's trying to make her!

"What ails you?" snorts Ajariah, looking at me over his cheaters. "You sick?"

"Yes, sir," I says, kind of faint; "I'm terrible sick, Mister Stubbs! I—I can't haul that ice cream up to Armitage's—I—you don't understand——"

"'Pears to me like you're a-doin' too much runnin' around at nights!" growls old Ajariah, coming out from behind the counter. "You been half asleep round here the hull day. Wouldn't be surprised if you wasn't gambling all night with them loafers in Nickmeyer's garage. That's all's the matter with you; you ain't been to bed. I kin tell by your eyes—look like two burnt holes in a blanket!"

"I wasn't doing no gambling," I says. "I never been in Nickmeyer's except for gas and oil."

"Where *was* you, then?" snarls Ajariah. "Speak up now!"

I says nothing at all. I ain't going to tell *him*! I sit up all night making the clown's costume for Stella Armitage's masquerade and have him cackle his head off!

"Can't say, eh?" he grunts. "I thot so. Well, you shake a leg and git that cream up to Armitage's, or you won't have no more job here than a rabbit!"

I know he means it. So I drag them cans of ice cream out to the flivver and run 'em up to Armitage's,

wishing I would have the good luck to hit a telegraph pole on the ways over.

Stella's house is lit up like a church, and there's more cars outside it than there is at a auto show. I see Spence's boat which I have took many's the ride in, but I don't see Spence, or nobody else, thank Heavens, till I run my flivver up the drive in the back.

The delivery and servants' entrance runs along the lawn, which is all fixed up with Chinese lanterns and streamers of different colored ribbon, and the Jap house boys is going around fixing up the tables. Most of the gang is there already, and I hear 'em laughing and kidding each other, and some of 'em is beginning to dance to the music of Eddie Granger's Vesper A. C. Jazz Band. Stella's old man hired the boys and I hear he paid Eddie five hundred bucks for the night and on top of that they all got a swell feed after the party was over.

Well, I manage to unload the ice cream without none of the gay masqueraders seeing me, but as I am backing the flivver around to come down the driveway, I get it and I get it good! They's a couple dancing right beside the hedge which separates the lawn from the drive, and they look up when they hear the noise of my bus. Its only by dumb luck that I don't run the flivver right into the hedge, because the couple is Judy Willcox and Rags Dempster.

Both of 'em is masked, but *I'd* know 'em if they had checked their faces with their hats! I know every line of Judy's, the way she carries herself and that dimple in her chin, which shows under the edge of the mask—I'd pick her out from a million without no trouble, be-

cause I'm cuckoo over her. And I know every line of Rags Dempster because I like him the same way I like working fourteen hours a day for twelve bucks a week. As she told me, Judy is dressed like a Oriental dancing girl, but Judy would make a Oriental dancing girl take poison! Rags is wearing an Indian chief's layout, for which his face is perfect.

Judy waves her hand to me, and I manage to tip my cap, and this Rags throws back his head and laughs. "Wait there for a minute, boy!" he hollers. "Wait there a minute and I'll send the butler out with a sandwich for you; you look hungry!"

Just before I shot through the drive in the flivver I hear Judy bawling Rags out. A little satisfaction, but not the satisfaction I wanted right then. To of kicked Rags over the hedge would of been much better!

That old tin can never traveled so fast in its life as it done from Stella Armitage's house to the store. Rounding the corner of Jefferson Lane to turn into First Street, I crashed over one of the three traffic standards in Drew City, and put ten years on Hank King, which happened to be standing beside it. I make Joe Lannon put his fish wagon up on the pavement, and when Constabule Watson comes running out at Valley Street, yelling at me and waving his club, why, I chased him almost into the station-house doors. That cost me plenty the next day, but I ain't thinking about that part of it then. I'm thinking about Judy Willcox and Rags Dempster, and why is it I didn't jump over that hedge at Stella Armitage's and have it out with Rags for once and for all!

By the time I got to the store I am in fine shape to commit murder, but old Ajariah is crazy to get to his checker tourney with Judge Tuckerman, and he hobbled right away without saying a word to me. If he had I would of surely lost my job right then and there, no fooling.

I'm just going to close up the store at half past nine when two fellows comes in and sits down at the fountain. They're a couple of tough-looking babies, for a fact. The youngest one of 'em has a flat nose and a cap pulled down over his eyes, and he's wearing a dirty white sweater. I never seen either of 'em before, and that's funny in Drew City, where I know everybody, you might say.

"A couple of ginger ales and make it snappy!" says the guy with the sweater.

That's no way to talk to me the way I'm feeling then!

"Take your time!" I says. "I got everything all closed here for the night and——"

"C'mon, c'mon, don't give me no argument; get them ginger ales out here, yokel!" he growls.

I kind of trembled, and I see in the mirror back of the fountain that my face is good and white. I got my mind all made up what I'm going to do when I hear a familiar honk honk outside the door. That's the signal Spence used to give when he come down to wait for me to close the store at night. In another minute he comes running in, all dressed up like a pirate and his face is red and mad looking.

"Gale, I just found out that—oh, about the reason

you didn't come up to Stella's to-night," he pants. "I hope you don't think I had anything to do with *that*. I've had a frightful row with Stella over it, and——"

The fellow with the sweater gets off the stool and walks up to the end of the fountain. He looks at Spence in the pirate's suit and back to his friend with a nasty grin. Then he turns to me, and the grin has went.

"Say, you big dumbell, get busy on them ginger ales or I'll slap you for a mock orange!" he snarls.

I am talking to Spence and I pay no attention. "That's all right, Spence," I says. "I don't blame *you* and maybe Stella's right. Go back and have a good time. I don't belong and——"

But Spence is looking over my shoulder at the other fellow, and Spence's eyes is wide and scared. He seems to be trying to make some signals to me with 'em too. The tough-looking baby suddenly grabs me by the shoulder and gives me a push. "Get back there and give us them drinks!" he bellers. "You——"

Never mind what he called me. I swung around and looked at him, and my mouth slips into a nervous grin, which I want to stop and can't. Then I shot out my right arm as hard as I could—like when I slammed that punching bag at Coney Island with Spence. My fist landed fair and square on this fellow's chin, and it felt like hitting the side of a building, but he went down on his back like I'd stabbed him through the heart.

Spence yelled, and the other fellow let out a terrible curse. But I felt wonderful. I never knocked nobody down before in my life, and I want to say it is quite a

sensation! My nerves gets quiet and my temper gets cool, and as I blew on my sore knuckles and little finger, which is beginning to swell and feels kind of numb, the only thing I'm wishing is that this fellow on the floor will get up and come at me!

Spence and the fellow that come to the store with the guy I hit is standing there staring at me like they can't believe their eyes. The stranger finally bends down and looks over his friend on the floor.

"You hit hard!" he grunts at me. "Get me a bottle of ammonia and some ice water."

I got 'em and he douses the cold water on this fellow's face, and, uncorking the ammonia, holds it under his nose. Pretty soon my victim's eyes opens, and the other fellow starts helping him up, with his face half turned to me.

"Know who you just stopped?" he says in a odd voice. I shook my head. What difference did *that* make?

"He's just Knockout Kelly," he says; "'at's all *he* is!"

"And you knocked him out—you knocked him *out!*" sings Spence, dancing around wildly.

Well, I get sick to my stomach, and that's a fact. *I hit Knockout Kelly, the prize fighter!* Why, I thought, he'll get up off that floor and about murder me! And he did straighten up on his feet just then and make a rush at me, but his friend holds him back.

"C'mere, you sap!" he hisses at him. "What d'ye wanna do—break your hands on this guy? We'll square this in good time!" He turns around to me

and winks heavy. "You—eh—you wanna beg K. O.'s pardon, *don't* you?"

Don't I? Say, you ought to see me grab this chance to escape being killed. I can't get my hand out quick enough. Imagine *me* hitting Knockout Kelly!

Knockout Kelly just barely touched my hand. "We'll get together on this again, feller!" he mumbles, not very forgiving, I must say.

"Sure!" says his friend, smiling at me and patting Knockout Kelly's shoulders. "Sure—we'll play you again some time. But *now*—eh—ever do any boxin', kid?" he asks me, looking me up and down.

"No, sir," I says; "I never did."

"Well—you're *goin'* to!" he says. "I'm Nate Shapiro, K. O.'s pilot. Come up to the Commercial House at ten tomorrow. I wanna talk to you. You're one sweet puncher, if you are a hick, and——"

"I can't get there till noon," I butts in. "I got to open up the store at seven-thirty."

"Open up nothin'!" snorts Nate Shapiro. "You're all through mixin' banana punches and the like. I'll get you more jack for your punches than you'll ever see here. C'mon, K. O."

And they went out.

ROUND TWO

THE KNIGHT IN GALE

THAT same night, when they have all went to bed in Mrs. Willcox's boarding house, I sneaked downstairs, got Judy's schoolbooks off the hall rack, and took 'em up to my room because after I have retired I find that me and sleep can't seem to get acquainted. The first one I open up is a French Dictionary. It could of been a Chinese Grammer for all it means to *me!* The only French I know is "Oo la la" and "Croix de Guerre," and now that the war's supposed to be over, why, both them remarks has went out of use. The next novel is entitled "Al Gebra" and is simply a case of crossing the alphabet with arithmetic. Two passages of Al gets me dizzy. "How much is twice H?" "Divide Y Z by 56." How do they get that way?

They's two books left, and in one of 'em is a note saying Judy has got to read this pair for her English Literature Class. I immediately join the Class. One book is called "The Saint's Tragedy," dashed off by a fellow named Charles Kingsley. The other is "The Last of the Barons," a much thicker book, by Edward Bulwer Lytton. I come near firing 'em out the window when I see Rags Dempster has wrote *his* name on the first page of both, right under Judy's!

"What thoughts do these books inspire you with?" is one of the questions Judy will be called upon to answer, according to the slip of paper in 'em. Well, I don't know what thoughts they inspired Judy with, but they is a wise crack in each of 'em which makes *me* do a piece of thinking, and that's a fact!

"Toil is the true knight's pastime!" claims Charles Kingsley, and "To have fame is a purgatory, to want it is a hell!" says Eddie Lytton. Well, if Charles is right, then every day I'm a knight, because I was toiling like a Chinese coolie behind Ajariah's soda fountain. As for Eddie's statement, I didn't know what it is to *have* fame, but he said a mouthful when he said to want it is a hell. Take it from me; I know! No dope fiend ever craved for a long-delayed pipe like I craved to be a success at something—*anything!* The only thing I really knew anything about was jerking soda, and I was eighteen. But I hadn't been plied with enough education to grab off a job with a future in it, or even a *present,* for that matter!

I had fame listed in my mind like I see the race horses listed on the programs at the County Fair at Drew City that summer: "Fame, aged, by Work, out of Ambition!" Well, I was going to lead the field under the wire on this imaginary horse, or croak trying.

I woke up at seven a. m. thinking about the heavy date I got with Knockout Kelly's manager at the Commercial House. Whilst I'm hopping around to keep warm under the coldest needle shower in Drew City, if not in the wide, wide world, I remember what Nate

Shapiro says to me after I have put Knockout Kelly on the floor: "You're all through mixin' banana punches and the like, kid—I'll get you more jack for your punches than you'll ever see here!"

I know that means he wants to make a prize fighter out of me, and then I think—why not? I have always made it the point to be healthy, and being born husky I've took the greatest of care to keep myself that way. When I been eating regular, like I had in Drew City for the past year, I stripped at 142, and if I walk under anything lower than five foot ten, why, I got to bend my head. Of course I had never done no fighting in a ring or much anywheres else either, but still I don't ever remember running home bawling because somebody picked on me. I've generally always been able to take care of myself since I've had to, and, to the best of my memory, that's been all my life.

The more I think of it whilst I'm getting dressed, the more I'm keen to say it with left hooks instead of with nut sundaes. It's a cinch I'll never set the lake ablaze whilst I'm buried in a small-town drug store, and the question which kept me awake at night when I was errand boy, newsboy, bobbing boy, and printer's boy is troubling me again. That question is, where do I go from here?

Then, again, boss boxers gets as much for mixing up two punches in a ring as I do for mixing up two million punches behind a fountain. I figure a dozen fights might give me enough jack to lay the foundation of a education and also pull a chair up to a dining-room table three times a day whilst I'm doing it. I

seen in the newspapers that Knockout Kelly, for the example, is to get five thousand dollars for boxing Jackie Frayne. And I knocked Kelly flat on his back with one punch! I think with a few more punches I can get a education, with a education I can get Judy Willcox, with Judy Willcox I can get anything!

At breakfast Mrs. Willcox asked me, land's sakes what am I thinking about, when I shake salt and pepper in my coffee and pour the cream on my fried eggs. Without hardly knowing what I'm saying, I tell her I'm thinking about Punch and Judy, which is true, but she stares at me so long I know my face is red, so I beat it. By the time I have got the fountain all polished up and iced for the day, I have decided to take Nate Shapiro up.

He's named ten a. m. as the time he wants to see me, and it's a good hour after that when I left the Commercial House a different fellow than what I was when I went in there. When I go up to see Nate Shapiro I got matters all set in my mind that I'm going to make my living boxing. Where I come out, I don't know. To be a professional scrapper a fellow needs a whole lot more stuff than just the ability to punch somebody in the jaw and the willingness to accept a duplicate in return. You got to study this game like you study to be a first-class doctor, lawyer, plumber, or banker. But then if you get to the top in it, you can put the first-class doctor, lawyer, plumber, and banker on your pay roll and never miss the money!

"When will I have my first bout?" I asked Shapiro. "In a week or so, that is roughly?"

"Roughly is right!" grins the hard-faced Shapiro. "Roughly is the way I want you to act in your first *fight*—not bout. But toss you into a ring inside of a week? Be yourself! It'll take you a dozen weeks to learn the first rule of boxin'."

"What's the first rule?" I says.

"Always keep your shoulder blades off the canvas!" says Shapiro. "Don't laugh. Forgettin' 'at rule some day will beat Dempsey!"

"Well, how long before I *would* fight, then?" I says.

"About six months," says Shapiro—"'at's if you show some stuff!" He comes over to the bed where I have sit down, or rather sunk down, when I hear the "six months!" I'd figured that in six months I'd either be whipped out of boxing or the biggest thing in it. "Don't take it so hard," goes on Shapiro, patting my arm; "I could let you step next week with some tenth-rater, he'd paste you silly, break your heart, cure you of ever liftin' your hands again to even protect yourself and I'd lose a possible champ. Believe me, buddy, I ain't in this box-fight game for the laughs in it. I'm thinkin' of Nate Shapiro first, last, and all the time! It wouldn't hurt *my nose* if you got yours broke, but it would hurt my bank roll, and 'at's one place I can't take a punch! I know how all you kids feels when you've knocked somebody stiff for the first time. Take you, for instance—you think because you flattened K. O. Kelly with a lucky punch 'at you're the cat's whiskers, now don't you?"

"Well, I—eh—" I begin, the bit bashful.

"Sure!" butts in Shapiro. "Well, don't think too

much of that, get me? 'At showed me you could hit—'at's *all*. You want to remember K. O. had his hands down, and he thought you would hit him the same way he thought you was Lillian Gish! You took him by the completest of surprise. Put six-ounce gloves on the both of you, flip you into a ring right now, and K. O. Kelly would stop you in less than a round, without workin' up a sweat!

"Why, I don't know nothin' about you at all. How do I know you can fight with your pan cut to ribbons, your eye closed tight, or your nose broke? How do I know you'll get up and mix it after a knockdown? I don't even know your name. What do they call you, kid?"

"Gale Galen," I says, getting gloomier every minute.

"'At's a good one too," says Shapiro. "Easy to say, what I mean. I was afraid you might have a monniker which would baffle the announcers."

"Oh, I won't box under my *right* name!" I says quickly. "I——"

"O. K.," Shapiro cuts me off. "If you do business, I'll pick you a good one, don't fret. Less see, you goaled Kelly with a punch, and I got a hunch we ought to build on 'at. They's 'One-Round' this and 'One-Punch' 'at—eh—how 'bout—I got it! We'll tag you 'Six-Second Smith'! 'At rolls off the tongue easy and it *means* somethin'. Yes, sir, 'at 'Six-Second Smith' is goin' to make the boy in the other corner thoughtful, and don't think it won't!"

"It'll make me thoughtful too," I says. "That's some name to live up to! Now, what—er—wages will

I get for the six months I'm—eh—learning my trade?"

"I'll see 'at you eat," says this ten-minute egg. "But not at the Ritz! Another thing, and you might as well know this goin' in—you blow up on me in your first scuffle and you'll find yourself in 'Who's Through in America.' I'll drop you like a hot penny! Show me somethin', even 'at you can *take* it—and you got a million to shoot at!"

I get up after a few minutes and tell Shapiro I'll consider matters again and let him know. I want to see what two people thinks about it—Judy Willcox and Spence Brock.

Well, I ain't been back on the fountain a half hour when Spence comes in for a egg chocolate malted milk. I served him my troubles with the drink.

Much to my surprise, Spence don't go wild over the idea of me becoming a pug. Somehow, he says, it seems to him like a step down, not up, for me to pick out prize fighting as a life work.

"Not so good, Gale!" he says. "Not so good. And —Judy won't like that!"

"Look here, Spence," I says, "I've simply got to make *some* move which will get me from behind this soda fountain into something worth while! I happen to be big and strong, and that lets me out. What else *can* I do, outside of being a fighter, with the education I got? D'ye think I want to be a soda jerker *all* my life?"

"But why get excited over it now?" grins Spence. "You're only eighteen, so am I. We've got our whole life before us and lots of time to choose a career. I'm

not giving the future a thought until I leave college, and I'm not *entering* Princeton until next year. Why, we're going to play around a whole lot yet before——"

"Where d'ye get that *we* stuff?" I butt in with a bitter laugh. Spence, with a millionaire father, classing himself with me! "Did it ever occur to you, Spence, that they's as much difference in our positions as they's miles between here and the moon? You should annoy yourself about the future, with the bank roll *you* got in back of you! Not that I begrudge you a nickel of it, Spence, you know that. But it's different here. I got to make my *own* future, and I got to make it now! I ain't going to Princeton next year, or any year; I'll have to take *my* view of college by hearsay. As for the playing around, fine—when I get somewhere. Right now, work, hustle, study what's going on around me—for that'll have to be my Princeton—till I find out what my particular trick is and then I'll go to it!"

"Atta boy!" says Spence, slapping the counter. He's already changed to my way of thinking, like he usually does. "More power to you! Well, that's fine! The first time you box in New York I'll bring the whole gang over to root for you, and I'll be cheer leader!" Then he gets serious and leans over the counter. "Listen, Gale," he says. "If you're not going to box for six months yet, and this Shapiro will only furnish your board and lodging until then—er—well, of course, there's a lot of little things you'll want, and—er—say, I have almost a thousand dollars of my own and I can let you have it—now don't get so red in the face, this

would be strictly a loan and you can pay me back when——"

"That's fine of you, Spence," I cut him off. "And I'll never forget it, don't think I will. But—I—I got some money from—from my grandfather in Kansas City the other day, and I'm sitting pretty as far as jack is concerned."

Spence gives me a odd look, but I don't flick a muscle.

"Oh, did you?" he says. "Well, I'm glad to hear that. But if you—er—if your grandfather ever refuses you, let me know. See you to-night!"

I don't get a nickel from my grandfather in Kansas City. I ain't got no grandfather. Both of 'em is dead, and I don't think either of 'em died and went to Kansas City. But I don't want to begin borrowing from Spence or nobody else. I don't want nothing gave to me; all I wanted was a chance to make it myself.

Spence has hardly went out when Lem Garfield, head and only clerk in The Elite Haberdashery, comes in for his daily dissipation. Lem's a incurable frosted-chocolate addict, and he admits I compose a wicked soda. I generally put everything in his drink but the day's receipts, and only charge him a thin dime, because, if they's one fellow I felt sorry for, it's Lem Garfield.

Lem was in the same boat I was—he's hungry for education too. The only difference between me and Lem was that disappointment had Lem licked. He'd quit trying. I'll quit trying when I'm dead!

Lem was born in Drew City and at twenty-three he's as gloomy and hard boiled as a guy of eighty. He's

sore at the wide, wide world, and I don't blame him. I'll tell you why. When the war was throwed open to all comers, Lem didn't wait to see if his number would win a free trip to Europe in the draft raffle; he throws up his job, hauls off, and enlists. Drew City got hysterical and give him a send-off which would of satisfied Babe Ruth.

As Lem himself says, the day he was born, the day he started for camp, and the day he stepped off the train coming back from the war was the three biggest days in his life! On the last two days mentioned Lem could of married any girl in Drew City, took any job, borrowed any amount of money, even robbed the First National Bank, and he'd of had everybody's good wishes. He was what is known as a "hero," and Drew City went double cuckoo over him. Especially when he come back from France, wounded and with a Croix de Guerre on his chest, pinned there by a big French general on the account Lem goes crazy and captures a German machin-gun nest all by himself.

That got in all the papers, put Drew City on the map, and Lem in the hospital. Now Lem was back of the gent's furnishing counter again, ignored and forgot. Even the kids don't pester him no more to see his medal or where he was wounded. Old Ajariah Stubbs says Lem ain't got no push in him. He had some push in him when he went through them Jerrys, didn't he?

"They ain't nothin' in bein' a hero!" says Lem bitterly, sipping his drink and opening up on his favorite subject. "What good did all them cheers do

me? I'd ruther been gave one good job with some kind of chances for advancement in it than a million of them 'Hurray for Lem Garfield's.' Ben Harkins, Joe Keen, Ollie Yerks, and them fellers got out of the draft on one excuse and another—Vince Neil, for example, on account he's got flat feet. As if *that* made a difference—we didn't have to dance with them Jerrys! But what I mean is this: all them fellers stayed home, tuk advantage of us boys bein' over there fightin' for 'em, and grabbed up all the good jobs. Ben Harkins was gettin' ten dollars a week in the bank when the draft tuk Matt Hamilton, the payin' teller. Ben managed to git himself married—hardly lived with her since—and got exemption. Now Ben's payin' teller and poor Matt's livin' in New York, workin' to-day and lookin' for work to-morrow. Matt got gassed. And that's the way it goes. A feller says anything about it, and they tell him: 'Forget it. The war's over!' As whosthis says, you'll find gratitude in the dictionary!"

"But they made a big fuss over you when you first come back, Lem, didn't they?" I says. I'll never ask Lem that no more. The next second I felt like I had struck a match back of the fountain and immediately seen Ajariah Stubbs's drug store go up in flames!

"Yeah!" snarled Lem, setting his glass down on the fountain with a click. "Yeah—they made a big fuss when I come back, over *themselves!* Mayor Gedge declares a holiday, Drew City is covered with flags and buntin', all the lodges, Eddie Granger's Vesper

Band, and the fire department parades, and the richest men in town was on the welcomin' committee. I never heard so many long-winded speeches in my hull life and everybody learns the entire words of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' for the fust time. They was two pages in the 'Sentinel' about me, and my pitcher and everything. Two weeks later they forgot I ever come back!"

"D'ye think they made all that fuss for *my* sake? Like fun! It give 'em a chance to be important for one day, and they snatched at it like the fust trout of the season after a fat fly. Them lifelong orators got a chance to orate and strut around wearin' 'Reception Committee' badges, high hats, and swollowtail coats, and that's why they done it! Is any of 'em interested in me now? No. Only to come around and ask me will I vote against the bonus and not ask my country to pay me for fightin' for it. Well, I don't want no bonus—I'm willin' to make my own way and aluss was. I'm agoin' to study law by mail. I've aluss had a hankerin' to be a lawyer, and Judge Tuckerman thinks I'd make a good one. If Drew City was really so all-fired proud of me, why didn't they give me a chance to make suthin' out of myself by fixin' so's I could go to law school?"

Well, I don't know about gratitude, but it did seem to me that Lem had a real kick coming. Maybe he *has* got a bent for law and *would* make a lawyer. They's no question but that he loves to argue, and I often heard old Ajariah snort that Lem's "wuss than a Philadelphia lawyer!" Ajariah meant that to be a

knock, but for all anybody knew, Lem would make good at it. But how was he going to find out?

Me and Lem was like two fellows without legs and both crazy to be runners. Artificial limbs would help us, but we ain't got the price, and there you are!

Lem argues that thousands of fellows in college is as out of place there as we'd be in Buckingham Palace. Fellows who's talents runs in entirely different directions from anything they're studying. Master plumbers wasting four years jamming their heads with French and Latin, useless to *them* and to be quickly forgot when they get out. Further authors getting their brains dulled by law, first-class authors studying medicine, boss salesmen grinding away at civil engineering. Whilst on the other hand, says Lem, fellows which would make cracker-jack lawyers, doctors, civil engineers, etc., is wasting their lives in gent's furnishing stores, plumbers' shops, soda fountains, offices, and like that. Why not limit college education to them which deserves it, instead of making it a rich man's way of getting his son off his hands for four years? They ain't half enough colleges now, claims Lem, to take care of the mobs which descends on 'em every year. State universities is snowed under by refugees from the high schools, and private colleges is swamped. So why not go through these millions and weed out for college only the ones which is actually going to benefit by it.

We're well warmed up to matters and Lem's addressing me like he really is a district attorney, and I'm a jury, when there is a interruption in the shape of Constabule Watson.

He marches right up to the fountain, glaring at me from under his bushy white eyebrows. I got a feeling that I am right on the brinks of having a lot of bad luck, because day before yesterday I liked to run over him with our delivery flivver.

Ajariah Stubbs comes out from behind the prescription counter to say hello to him and then stops short when Constabule Watson growls at me.

"Git off that air white coat and come over to the courthouse with me, you young hellion! I got a warrant fur your arrest fur reckless drivin'. Should be for aggravated assault and battery. You come near killin' me yistiddy!"

Ajariah opens his mouth like a fresh-caught bass and stares from me to Constabule Watson, like he thinks his ears is lying to him. But Lem, the coming lawyer, is all business.

"Let's see your warrant, constabule," he says, very important. "Don't yew say a word, Gale, till I get a chance to look into this!"

"Fust thing *you* know I'll 'rest you fur interferin' with a officer of the law," snorts Constabule Watson. "You keep your long nose out o' this, Lem Garfield, or it'll be the wuss fur you! Better git over to your shop. I see Nate Miller in there after a pair of overalls and no one to wait on him."

Lem beat it.

"Land o' Goshen!" says Ajariah. "What's all this to do about? What did you say this young scallywag done—steal suthin'?"

While Constabule Watson's telling old Ajariah the

details of my horrible crime, I slipped off my white coat and apron and put on my cap. We all go over to the courthouse together. Ajariah locked up the store and come with us, because a hearing in Judge Tuckerman's court is more fun than any circus you ever seen. More fun for everybody but the prisoners!

I guess everybody in the State of New Jersey has heard about old Judge Tuckerman, mostly because of what he does to auto tourists which speeds over the State road through Drew City—a road which would make a ballroom floor look bumpy and rough. There's about eighty-six speed traps along the two-mile straightaway, which is kept in repair by auto drivers from all over the country, Judge Tuckerman receiving the donations by the via of stiff fines and stiffer costs. He ain't so particular about the fines, the State gets that, but the costs has *got* to be paid because they go to him as wages.

Judge Tuckerman is old enough to of knew Adam personally, and he's got a way of looking at you over his glasses which makes you think that even if you didn't do whatever you're accused of, why, you probably *would* of done it if you'd had the chance. He won't let no lawyers plead in his court, because he says they's no lawyer living which knows half the law *he* does, and him being a judge proves it. Pleading not guilty is the same as contempt of court, on the account Judge Tuckerman claims you *must* be guilty or you wouldn't be dragged up before him. Once the judge grabs up his gavel, pounds on his desk and opens up court, why, all friendship ceases!

Well, they's about a dozen cases brought before Judge Tuckerman this day, running all the way from speeding to assault and battery. I don't think the judge wasted a half hour on the lot of 'em. Every one of the prisoners pleaded innocent, but that made no difference to Judge Tuckerman, which found 'em all guilty, sometimes before they got two and a half words out of their mouths, and slapped on the fines and costs with a lavish hand. I'm still laughing at these samples of Tuckerman justice when *my* case is called.

The judge frowns heavy at me when Constabule Watson got done telling him how I nearly run him down with our delivery flivver.

"Let's hear what ye got to say, young feller," says Judge Tuckerman, squinting at me over his cheaters. "And don't tell no more lies than ye have to! How d'ye plead?"

Well, I seen what the rest of 'em got by pleading innocent so I thought I'd save time. "Guilty!" I says promptly.

Instead of pleasing Judge Tuckerman, this honest confession seems to get him good and sore! He looks at me in a kind of pained surprise. I guess he thought I had deliberately spiked his guns, stopping him from giving me a good bawling out and then worming a confession out of me. He loves to do that, and I just kind of ruined his day for him by pleading guilty right off the bat.

"Well, I'll just make a example of ye for bein' so smart!" he growls. "Thutty-five dollars fine and fifteen

dollars costs. Maybe that'll take that grin off yer face!"

It did, for a fact! I ain't got fifty dollars any more than I got three ears. Fifty bucks is a month's wages —a pile of money! Old Ajariah is scowling at me something fierce, but still he's my only hope. So I took a deep breath and turned to him.

"Mr. Stubbs," I says, "can I—eh—I—will you loan me fifty dollars, please? You can take it out of my pay, as much as you want a week."

Old Ajariah gives me a indignant whinny and glares at me.

"I'll do no sich thing!" he grunts. "And ye ain't working fur *me* no more, ye young rip. I'm gettin' shut of you right now! Ask some of them rich friends o' yourn—them shameless young baggages from the school, with their short skirts and boys' haircuts, and them good-fur-nothin' cubs which hangs around my sody fountain. See if *they'll* help ye, now you're in trouble!" And he looks around the courtroom, grinning like a shaggy old wolf, which is what he reminds me of just then.

I felt like hollering at Ajariah right there in court that if it wasn't for the "shameless young baggages" and their boy friends from Drew City Prep coming in for sodas every day, he'd have to close up his drug store. But I got other things to think about right then. I got to get hold of fifty bucks or—then Judge Tuckerman bangs impatiently on the desk with his gavel.

"Can't pay the fine, hey?" he says. "The idea! A

strappin' young buck like you and you ain't got fifty dollars, eh? Wal—*thutty days in the workhouse!*"

Blam!

I feel like the courthouse has fell in on me. Thirty days in jail! Why, thirty *minutes* in a cell would drive me cuckoo! I been up against it good and plenty many times since I been a kid, but jail is one thing I've missed. It would about *kill* me, I'm satisfied of that! I stand there kind of dizzy till Constabule Watson grabs my arm and leads me over to Jeff Haines, Judge Tuckerman's clerk. Jeff's running a ink roller over a piece of paper, and he suddenly reaches out and snatches hold of my wrist. "Ever had your finger prints tak?" he says, with a nasty grin.

Well, this here's too much. You'd think I was a burglar or something—take my finger prints! I jerked my wrist away so hard I pulled Jeff Haines halfways over his desk, and the sticky ink gets all over his clothes and face, which tickles me silly. Constabule Watson reaches for me, when they's a commotion at the door of the courtroom and in rushes Nate Shapiro.

"Where's 'at kid from the drug store?" he bellows.

I waved my hand to him. Never again in my life will I be so glad to see Nate Shapiro, no matter *what* he does for me! Judge Tuckerman bangs with his gavel and splits a glare between me and Nate.

"Who d'ye think ye be, a-bustin' into my court like this?" howls the judge. "I fine ye twenty-five dollars for contempt of court, and if ye don't pay it I'll send ye to jail!"

Nate, which looks relieved when he sees me, just

sneers. He pulls a roll of bills from his pocket that no grayhound in the world could jump over, and he throws a few of 'em on the desk. "Shoot the piece, grandpa!" he says. "There's the twenty-five fish, and 'at's all you git if you cry your eyes out!" He turns to me: "You in a jam?" he asks quickly, paying no attention to the judge's red face.

In a low voice I told him, kind of hurriedly, what was what. Nate grunts and hands the raging Jeff Haines my fifty-dollar fine.

" 'At's seventy-five bucks I'm in you," he says to me. "C'mon, git out of here before this old hick takes me for his winter expenses!"

Well, getting the air from Ajariah Stubbs, and Nate Shapiro coming to my rescue at the critical minute, just about decided me what to do. I walked back to the Commercial House with Nate, and before I left him I had signed a contract with him, fixed legal by Mr. Tompkins, the recorder of deeds and notary public. Nate agrees to room, board, and clothe me till the time I'm able to earn my first jack in the ring; after that I'm to give him fifty per cent of my wages. He promises he'll rush me along to the top, but he says I got to be satisfied with small purses at first. This kind of casts me down a bit. I ask him what he means by "small purses."

"Oh—a couple hundred bucks a fight," he says, carelessly.

Two hundred dollars a fight and Nate Shapiro calls that *small!* Why, I'd been working twelve hours a day for nearly four months for that much jack. And,

just think, if I fought every night I could make fourteen hundred dollars a week! I told Nate that, and he grabs my arm and swings me around. "Are you tryin' to kid somebody?" he snaps. I shook my head, and Nate gives me a long look. Then he laughs "Well, you *don't* know what it's all about, for a fact!" He says. "Fight every night, hey? How d'ye git 'at way? You work twice a month and stay perpendicular whilst you're in there, and I'll be tickled!"

I figure I'll tell Judy all about this after supper that night and see what *she* thinks about me becoming a boxer. Of course the thing's done now, but still and all a few words of encouragement from her would help me a lot. But once again I find luck's against me. Judy has went out canoeing on the lake with Rags Dempster.

A little later Spence Brock picks me up downtown in his new racing car, so I hop in beside him and tell him all the various adventures which has happened to me since he seen me that morning. Spence listens with the greatest of surprise and attention, and when I tell him about how old Ajariah Stubbs throwed me down, why, Spence swears they will never be another boy or girl from Drew City Prep go into his store, not even to use the phone. That cost Ajariah about $100 a week. While we're talking, Spence swings the car to the bridge over the lake, and halfways across we get a blowout. I jump out to help Spence change the shoe, and happen to glance down at the water. Drifting along so's they'll pass right under us is Rags and Judy in Rags's canoe. The arc lights along the bridge shows their faces up plain as day.

Spence hears me grind my teeth, and he pats my arm sympathetically, because he knows how I feel with the regards to Judy. The canoe's still drifting, when suddenly Rags gets up and starts towards Judy's end of it, feeling his way carefully so's not to upset it. Half rising, Judy calls to him to go back, and she sounds real scared. But Rags keeps coming on, laughing kind of nasty, and Spence whispers, almost to himself: "The big hound—not so good, Rags!"

Not so good? Say—my nails is biting into the wooden rail of the bridge, and I feel the blood trying to burst out of my temples. I'm glad I never felt that way in the ring. If I had, I'd of killed somebody! Without much idea of what I'm going to do, I throwed one leg up over the rail, and just then Rags makes a swift grab for Judy. She breaks away, and the canoe tips over, dumping 'em both in the lake.

Spence stands there petrified as the canoe rights itself and slowly floats away, but I reach the top of the rail in one bound as Judy comes coughing and spluttering to the surface. Then I jumped in after her. The last thing I remember is Spence's yell and Judy looking wild-eyed at me as I hit the water a foot from her head. Not having saw me before, she must of thought I fell right out of the sky! Then I went down, down, down. They say the lake's fifteen feet deep under the bridge, but I don't believe it. I bet it's fifteen hundred! I took in about four gallons of muddy water and come up fighting for air. One look shows me Judy, Spence, and Rags swimming around the canoe like they've lived in water all their lives. Nobody in

no danger there. That's all I see, except Spence thrashing the water toward me when he spots my head. Then I went under again.

I couldn't swim a stroke. A swell rescuing hero, hey?

Spence, which has win cups in interscholastic swimming races, was the real hero. He had to rescue *me!* By some expert juggling we all managed to get in the canoe and to the bank of the lake, where we got out, all set-ups for pneumonia if it happened to come along. Spence runs to his car and gets the lap robe to wrap around Judy, and while he's gone Rags looks at me and sneers.

"What do you think *you* are—a movie hero?" he says to me. "Imagine going overboard to save a person's life and not even being able to swim!" He laughs long and loud.

None of that water has soaked through to my temper yet, and I'm just going to tie into him when Judy lays her wet hand on my equally wet arm.

"You—you can't swim at *all,* Gale?" she asks me, her eyes opening wide. Even bedraggled from the ducking in the lake, she looked like a million dollars.

"No, I can't, Judy," I says, getting good and red. "But I didn't think of that when I jumped in. I was thinking of—Oh, what's the use, I just made a fool of myself. Let's forget it!"

"I'll *never* forget it, Gale!" she says kind of soft, and her hand's still on my arm. "I think that was wonderful. *Wonderful!* That was *real* courage—Oh,

if you had been drowned! You knew you couldn't swim and that the lake was deep, and yet——"

This is steaming Rags up. He takes out a wallet and removes a bill, stepping over to us.

"Here, boy," he says, offering me the bill, "get yourself some dry clothes and—eh—run along now. If there's any change, you might—eh—buy yourself some swimming lessons!"

I knocked the bill out of his hand and he would of surely followed it to the ground if Judy hadn't pushed quickly in between us. She gives Rags as two-handed a bawling out as I ever heard in my life, and when she got through, Rags looked like a whipped stray dog.

Spence come along at the tail end of the thing, and his eyes twinkled as Judy wound up by turning her back on Rags and taking my arm to Spence's car. After changing the punctured shoe Spence drove Judy and me home, and she insisted on spreading half the lap robe over me. We held hands under it like a couple of kids all the ways to the house, and if you could ever see Judy you would know that a little thing like being ducked in a lake is nothing compared to that!

Well, Mrs. Willcox is scared stiff when she sees us come in looking like a couple of drownded rats, but Judy laughs things off and runs up to change her clothes while I go to my room and do likewise. I'm just about dressed when Judy knocks on my door and says to come right down to the parlor when I'm ready, because her mother is making us both something hot to keep off a cold. So I go downstairs, and there's some hot lemonade and Judy's dissolving rock candy

in it. She's got some kind of a Japanese kimona on and she's just a magazine cover come to life.

It nearly drives me crazy when I think I've got to leave Drew City for a while, and maybe Rags Dempster with all his money will get her, before I've had a chance to make good. When Mrs. Willcox comes in I tell 'em both all about what happened to me during the course of the day and that I'm going away with Nate Shapiro to be a boxer, because I want to make enough money to educate myself and get somewhere. Then I'm coming back to Drew City——

I stopped there, looking hard at Judy, and she knows what I mean, for she gets a beautiful red which don't escape her mother, who looks from me to Judy a bit sharp, but says nothing.

The three of us talks things over for quite the while. Judy don't seem to be a bit against me being a boxer, but she also thinks I might go just as far *without* a college education.

"You know, Gale, that Ingersoll said college was a place where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed!" she says. "And I—I don't like your going away one bit! That is, I—I mean—" She breaks off, blushing again, and Mrs. Willcox butts in to say *she* thinks I'm all wrong to leave Drew City to go out in the world and try to get famous. I'm too poor to be proud, she says, and on top of that, pride is sinful.

Then she tells me what the Bible says about it. She thinks I should stay in Drew City and take up some good trade like drug clerk, steam fitter, garage mechanic, or the like which, she says, "will pay you

your good twenty-five to thirty dollars a week some day!"

It also slips out, while Judy fidgets and coughs, that Mrs. Willcox's a hundred dollars shy on a note held by the bank and due in a week. How she's going to get the century is something she don't know. This bothers me not the little, and I am thinking is there any way *I* could scare up that hundred bucks short of burglary and get it to that dear old lady without her knowing who sent it, when the doorbell rings. Judy seems glad of the interruption to her mother's hard-luck story and runs to the door.

Mrs. Willcox peeps out the window through the curtains.

"Why, it's Mr. Dempster!" she says in a pleased voice.

I liked to fall out of my chair! What is this fathead doing around here after what just happened at the lake? And "Mister" Dempster! This big stiff's only about my age—but he's "Mister" and I'm just Gale. Still, if money gets a fellow attention in Wall Street, why shouldn't it in Drew City?

Judy walks in ahead of Rags without saying a word. She looks meaningly at me and then back to Rags, very stern and cold.

"Well?" she says to him, eighty below zero.

But with Mrs. Willcox, it's different! She runs and grabs Rags's hat and coat and pushes a worn chair back of the curtains on the sly, and generally acts as flustered as if Rags was the Prince from Wales. This gets Judy's goat and ruins *my* animal, especially when

Rags acts as if this was only what was due him.

"I—ah—I wish to apologize for my conduct at the lake, Judy," he says. "And I'm sorry for—ah—what I said to you, Galen. Your going into the water under the circumstances was very—ah—courageous, even if you were unable to be of the slightest assistance, and, in fact, had to be rescued yourself."

He had to tag *that* on at the end with a faint, nasty smile, to make it look to Mrs. Willcox like I'd kind of bungled things all up. But Judy looks agreeably surprised and kind of winks at me from behind him to take his outstretched hand. I didn't want to—I know this fellow is simply stalling—but I shook hands.

Then Rags sprang his real surprise. He offers me a job in his old man's carpet factory, and he does it in a silky, politely insulting manner which would of made a starving beggar turn the offer down if he had breath left to refuse! Looking past *me,* like I'm a horse, or the like, he's talking about, he tells Mrs. Willcox I'll have a opportunity to learn a good trade in the carpet mill and not be a "unskilled laborer" like I am now. He thinks he might get me ten or twelve a week to start. Not in the *office*—oh, no! I haven't got enough schooling for that, and then they have to be —ah—particular—but in the mill.

The high and mighty tone of his voice gets me red-headed! I can read faces better than Judy or her mother—I've saw more, for one thing—and I know Rags is simply doing all this to devil me. He knows darn well I wouldn't be obligated to him for as much as the correct time, but he's making plenty display be-

fore Judy and her mother. He goes over *very* big with Mrs. Willcox, for she immediately tells me I'm getting the chance of a lifetime and I'll be crazy not to take it.

Even Judy seems to think that way too, telling me—in one quick whisper which sent my heart pumping like a hydraulic drill—that she don't want me to go away. But I licked *that* temptation before it got its hands up. I wasn't going to be buried in no Drew City carpet factory before I'd had a chance to see for myself am I a false alarm or do I mean something! So I thanked Rags as polite as I could, but I says I got something better in view. Then I says good night all around and went up to my room.

The next morning, after I pack, I went down to the Commercial House, and for one solid hour me and Nate Shapiro argued each other black in the face. Only by flatly refusing to leave Drew City with him do I finally get what I'm after. I got a hundred bucks from him and mailed it to Mrs. Willcox in a plain envelope, with nothing to show who it come from. So that was that.

Well, Drew City's only thirty-eight miles from New York, and I figured I can maybe run down for *Sundays*. I promised to write Spence every few days and let him know how they're breaking for me, and then I go back to the house for the big farewell to Judy and her mother. Now that Mrs. Willcox seen I was determined to go, why, she cried a little bit and actually *kissed* me on the forehead, saying she had come to look on me like a son. And even though she thought I was making a big mistake, she hoped I had all kinds

of good luck and would be a good boy in New York as I had been whilst I lived in her house.

Well, I'm kind of upset myself. Mrs. Willcox had always been nice to me, but I never thought she liked me like that, and darned if I don't begin gulping and wiping my own eyes. I think maybe if Judy had asked me right at that minute to stay I might of chucked the whole thing! But Judy don't come in till after Mrs. Willcox had gave me a little Bible with my name in it and a homemade strawberry shortcake to take to New York with me, because she knows I'm crazy about it the way she makes it. Then Judy come along.

Girls change their feelings like you change a collar! From the way she acted the day before I think I'm sitting pretty. She couldn't of been nicer, but *now* it's different. Before I can say a word she tells me very sarcastic it's too bad I don't find Drew City attractive enough to suit my exacting taste, and she hopes I have a nice time in New York. I says I don't expect to have a nice time or a nice anything till I see her again, but that I got to go where I'll get a chance. I took hold of her hand and says to please not be sore at me for leaving, and that some day maybe I'd be able to buy Drew City and give it to her to play with. But Judy says I could of done as well there as anywhere, and that's just a excuse to get away.

To change the subject, I ask her will she give me one of her pictures. She says am I afraid I will forget what she looks like, and I'm nervous anyways and that puts on the finishing touches! I *was* going to ask her would she kiss me good-bye and I'd of probably got

slapped in the face, but now I just tipped my cap and blew.

I'm still thinking about her and what a sap I was to leave that way, when me and knockout Kelly and Nate Shapiro gets into New York at noon. Two hours later Judy and everything else has been knocked out of my head for the time being at least. Nate has me put on the gloves at Lefty Mullen's gym with Knockout Kelly, and I learned about boxing from him!

It come about like this: After we get our suit cases parked in a hotel on Sixth Avenue, we go up to this gym, where lots of fighters around New York trains. Nate wants to see how I strip and if I know anything at all about using my hands. Well, he gets me a pair of red swimming shoes, and laces on the first pair of boxing gloves I ever wore in my life. In ring togs, Knockout Kelly is standing by watching me, with a terrible scowl on his face. All the ways up in the train he ain't said a word to me nor I to him. Knockout Kelly's real name is Mendal Nussbaum, and when stripped for action he's certainly one tough-looking baby, for a fact! Even though I did knock him down a couple of days before, I can't help feeling how much better it would be for me if we was both friends.

Nate finally calls him over.

"See what he's got," he says to him, nodding to me. "No playin' rough—just feel the kid out. If you deliberately crash him, K. O., I'll see 'at you git the same!"

Kelly just grunts, sizing me up with his beady little red eyes. Nate pulls out his watch. "Less go!" he says.

I could see and feel how awkward *I* was the minute Kelly put up his hands. He stuck out his left glove, and it connected with my nose, bringing salty water out of both my eyes. Then his right thudded into my stomach, and I commence to feel terrible sick. Kelly stepped in and clinched with me, roughing me around while he whispers hoarsely in my ear: "That's just for a starter, you big yokel! I'm gonna slap you for a Chinese ash can and send you back to that slab in Jersey on a shutter!"

Up to that time I hadn't been a bit sore. I didn't mind getting hurt. I expected to at first, knowing nothing at all about the fine points of the game. But this kind of stuff's different! I wrenched away from Kelly and swung my left glove at his jaw. He ducked his head and I missed a mile. Then he come up grinning under my arms, landing both his hands to my face —hard. I think I see a opening and I drive my right hand into it. It hit the air, and the next thing I know I am sitting on the floor, which for some reason is going around and around and around!

"Time!" hollers Shapiro and bends over me, dousing me with a wet sponge. "I hope 'at showed you somethin', kid," he says. "Never lead with your right—it leaves you wide open for the other guy's counter. Y'see, Kelly just stepped aside and dropped you with a left hook. Well, 'at's all for now!"

"You better keep that baby in a hothouse!" snarls Kelly, looking terrible disappointed. "He'll never get *nowheres*. He's got a glass jaw and he's as yellah as all the lemons in the world!"

"Shut up!" bawls Shapiro, pushing him away. "I'm ——"

I'm on my feet by this time and the dizziness has went. My jaw's so sore I can hardly close my mouth, but that "yellah" stuff set me ablaze! All the things which had happened to me in the last two days comes to a head. Getting pinched, doing that fool dive into the lake, having Rags Dempster lord it over me, leaving Drew City, and Judy's cold good-bye. Now this guy calls me "yellah" and likewise knocks me flat. Too much! I ain't figuring on starting my climb to the top this way. My mouth is twitching into a silly grin, like it always does when I'm crazy mad. I can't control that to save my soul, and that nervous flickering of my lips seems to make a lot of people think I'm faint-hearted. I pushed the surprised Shapiro away and stood in front of the leering Kelly.

"Put up your hands!" I snarls, as tough as him.

Then the fun began.

Kelly sent a wicked smash at my face, but I expected this one and kind of clumsily ducked it. It only hit me a glancing blow, but they was force enough in it to knock me aside, and the next punch, catching me off balance, floored me again. I bounced right up, but I'm goofy, for a fact! They's at least *three* sneering Kellys in front of me, the way it looks to me. He stepped in close again and—well, it just *rains* boxing gloves on my face and body. I don't know how many times I hit the mat, whatever it was it was enough!

I know the last time I crawled to my feet I happened to glance at my heaving chest and I see it's splattered

with blood, I guess from my face, which feels like I been hit with a broken bottle. Out of the corner of my right eye I see part of my nose swelled up like a cabbage. I can't breathe through it at all. My left eye is closed tight. But they's a few marks on Knockout Kelly too. His lips is puffed and a red trickle's coming from one ear. Oh, this box fighting is no child's play. Whatever I made at it, I earned!

Kelly seems to be hitting me almost whenever and wherever he wants, but I feel his blows is getting weaker. I don't hit the floor no more than that terrible left glove of his socks against my chin. I'm only pasting him once to ten of his, and then only by dum luck. Yet when I do land on him, he doubles up and grunts and his breath's coming in gasps.

Then for the first time I caught him fair and square on his concrete jaw, and he went down on his back with a crash. My hand feels num. I hear Shapiro and some other people yelling, but I can't believe they're in the gym, their voices sound so far away.

Kelly stays a long time on one knee, it seems to me, and then's he's on his feet, and I let him hit me three or four times without even trying to clock the punches. What's the use? I don't know enough about the game to block him, anyways. I'm willing to take these wallops to get one more in on his jaw. I see another chance and I let go with both hands, first the left and then the right.

My left caught him on the bridge of his nose and I felt it give, and then, to my great surprise, Kelly's face turns a bright red all over and it even goes down to his

white trunks—like he'd stood under a shower composed of grape juice! My right glove socked him over the heart and he fell in toward me, his hands dropping down at his sides. Honest, he's laying on me like a dead man.

Some voices hollers "Finish him, kid!" and now that I think of it afterward, I'm sorry to say I pushed him off and tried to do just what the voices said!

But you want to remember that Kelly had beaten and battered me around that gym till I was no more the Gale Galen of Drew City than I am Prince of Wales. As I shoved Kelly off he managed to land a weak punch just on the line of my belt. I took careful and deliberate aim at his jaw and was just going to let go when Nate Shapiro grabbed me around the waist and pulled me to one side. Knockout Kelly slumped half to the floor in the arms of two other fellows.

"Feel hurt anywheres inside, kid?" says Nate anxiously in my ear. They's a crowd around me. Somebody says: "Who is he?" Shapiro says, very proud: "Six-Second Smith, 'at's who he is!"

"I ain't hurt inside or anywheres else either!" I says, shaking myself. "How long was we fighting—a couple of hours?"

"I guess it seems 'at way!" grins Nate, running his hands all over me, like a doctor looking for breaks. "You stepped four and a half minutes with the toughest egg in his class. Kelly's got a draw with the champ. Sweet Papa, if you only *knew* somethin'! Well, *I'll* fix 'at part of it. You got a heart and you

can sock—I'll teach you to know your right glove from the time-keeper, and if we don't cop the title in a year I'll quit managin' pugs and go to work!"

Kelly comes stumbling over at this minute and growls at Shapiro:

"What did you stop it for? They was nobody hurt! I wasn't out. I was stallin'—you didn't have to save me!"

"*You,* you big boloney?" sneers Shapiro, draping a bathrobe around me like I'm a cracked race horse. They's two fellows rubbing me with oil. "I wasn't even thinkin' *of you!* I didn't want this boy to break his hands on you—he ain't got no bandages on. D'ye think he's yellah now?"

Knockout Kelly grins kind of sheepish. Then he reaches down and shakes my glove. "It's all fun, ain't it, kid?" he says through his puffed lips. "I think the two of us could lick any sixty cops in the world, how 'bout it? Cheese, but you got a sweet right!"

"And, cheese, but *you* got a sweet left!" I says, shaking his glove.

ROUND THREE

"SIX-SECOND SMITH"

THREE months of my sentence was up and I had three months more to serve when I got time off for good behavior. No, I ain't been in jail, though I might as well of been for all the liberty I got. Out of bed, 6.30 a. m. In bed, 9 p. m. In between, work like a field hand, with a couple of scowling, bull-necked huskies ready to climb my back the second I showed signs of dogging it.

I been training for my first professional box fight.

Where this scuffle was going to take place, how many rounds and how much I was going to get for doing my stuff, was all mysteries to me for a long time. I didn't even know who I was going to battle till a few days before the fight. These little details was in the hands of Nate Shapiro, and it's exactly as easy to get information out of Nate as it is to get sunburned in a coal mine.

While I'm training for my first brawl in a ring, I sit up reading till almost midnight as usual, with the keyhole plugged and a rug stuffed under the door, so's if Nate happens to pass my room he won't see the light. If he'd had any idea that I wasn't pounding my ear, he'd been fit to be tied. Nate ain't much of a reader.

A telephone book, a bank book and *The Police Gazette,* about makes up Nate's library. But it was different here. I am a reading fool! I wade through everything I can get my hands on, from newspapers to encyclopedias, making all stops in between. I gulp 'em all down raw, with a dictionary as a chaser. If it wasn't for that dictionary most of these books could be in code, for all *I* could read 'em. But with Mr. Webster's famous novel by my side, I'm all set. When I stumble across words which I have never been intimate with, like "obsolete" and "exchequer," for example, why, all I got to do is open up my dictionary and form what I hope will be a lifelong acquaintance with 'em. I met twenty or thirty new words a night in that way alone. Especially "triapsidal," which is anything having three apsis and of course everybody knows what a apsis.

Maybe you think it's funny for a young fellow who was going to be a prize fighter to spend as much time studying bright books as he did studying right hooks. Well, the answer to that one is that I was only going to be in the ring till I'd enough jack to get two things —a schooling and a line on what my *trick* was, to the viz, what was the game I was born to win at? Fellows has fought for girls, for money, for revengeance, for notoriety, and for fun. I fought for a education!

In the eighteen years I'd been trying to discover what it's all about, I'd tried my hand at nearly everything but selling palm-leaf fans at the North Pole. I couldn't pick my jobs—I had bid teacher good-by too soon. So I took 'em as they come along, hating 'em all, quitting whenever I got a chance to think too long about 'em

and getting canned whenever the boss got a chance to think too long about me. But I made up my mind to stick in the fight game till I got enough jack together to educate myself and eat while I was doing it. Even if I couldn't get no college degree, if opportunity ever knocked at my door I at least wanted to be able to carry on a conversation with it!

I learned a good deal from Shapiro and Knockout Kelly, as far as that part of it goes. None of their teachings would help me pass the entrance examinations for Harvard, but they did me a world of good in the school I was entering then. Fighters may be born, but *boxers* is made!

For three monotonus months my daily routine, with Nate holding a watch on me, started off with a three to five mile trot on the road every morning, wearing three heavy wool sweaters so's I'd perspire off weight. I had a terrible time keeping inside the welter weight limit, 145 lbs. I hadn't stopped growing yet and this daily exercise was filling out my chest and muscles till Nate put me on a diet like I'm a chorus girl. After the cross-country run comes a cold shower, than I flop out on a table and a husky dinge rubber sprinkles me fluently with a mixture of oil of wintergreen and eucaliptus and commences to slowly knead me like dough, working up speed gradually till at the windup he's patting and slapping me till the noise sounds like a couple of crazy motorcycles chasing a runaway horse on a cement pavement. When he got through I'd feel like *I* had acted as the pavement! Then comes punching a sack filled with sand, which Nate said weighs 250

pounds, but which I'm satisfied weighed that many tons, especially after I'd slugged it for about twenty minutes. Then me and Kayo Kelly and Two-Punch Jackson throwed the medicine ball around till Nate blew the whistle on that. Next I yanked some weighted pulleys back and forth, then shadow boxing, where you act like you was a cuckoo and trade rights and lefts with the air, then skipping rope, and, after a rest, a few rounds of light sparring with Knockout Kelly and sometimes Two-Punch Jackson, which was fifty pounds heavier than me, but called my right hook to the jaw "the cat's cuffs!"

Nate said the worst fault I had then was the habit of leading with my right hand instead of with my left. He spent weeks trying to break me of it, hours drumming into my ears, "Lead with a straight left—then hook your right!" over and over again.

"You got a heart and you can sock!" says Nate, stopping my workout one day, "but you telegraph the other guy everything you're going to do. The worst preliminary boloney which ever rubbed a shoe in rosin would drop you for the count when you lead wit' 'at right of yours! Your left hand's about as much use to you as a pair of dancing pumps would be to a shad. Well, I'll fix 'at to-morrow!"

The next day, Nate begins tieing my right hand behind my back and making me spar with the left only. I took plenty punishment from some highly-tickled handlers for awhile, but at the end of a few days I had uncovered a left jab which afterwards was poison to many's the good boy.

Well, I came back to Drew City and I brung Kayo Kelly and Nate Shapiro with me. We all camped at Mrs. Willcox's boarding house and everybody was happy. The three of us being there meant more jack for that dear old lady every week and Nate and Kayo don't like living in the nearest thing they've had to a home since they been kids any more than they like their right eyes. Try to tell Mrs. Willcox that prize fighters is no good! We couldn't do enough for her and she couldn't do enough for us. She wasn't in the position to afford no hired help, and Judy, which was then going to Drew City Prep, is kept pretty busy with her lessons and the etc. Well, me and Kayo and Nate is the official maids and hired men. We all took turns in washing the dishes, peeling potatoes, chopping wood, tending the lawn, house cleaning, and like that. We wouldn't let her do *nothing*. I wish you could of saw Knockout Kelly, one of the toughest boys which ever laced on a glove, out in Mrs Willcox's kitchen with a gingham apron tied around him, washing dishes and liking it! Or the hard-boiled Nate Shapiro shaking a winked dust cloth in the parlor, after I have went through it with a broom and tea-leaves. Kayo Kelly said he bet he'd make a swell housewife for somebody after he got through with the ring.

Of course, the main reason I come back to Drew City was because of Judy. I was so crazy over Judy Willcox that half the time I didn't know if I was afoot or horseback!

I ain't two days back in New York after I went away with Nate, when I get a letter from her and her

picture, too. After reading the letter about a dozen times and looking at her picture for a half hour even, I felt like rushing right back to her and Drew City and leaving prize fighting flat on its back! But common sense and Nate Shapiro prevented me. On Judy's picture she wrote: "To Gale Galen, from Judy Willcox, his friend and well wisher." So I had my picture took by a swell Third Avenue photographer, in my ring togs, and I wrote on it: "To Judy Willcox, from Six-Second Smith, her friend and well wisher and admirer and promising contender for the world's welterweight championship."

After that, letters between us flew back and forth like seagulls. But while all Judy's notes is full of best wishes and hopes that I'll be a great man some day and remember Lincoln started life as a lowly rail-splitter and wound up as President and the etc. why they is very little mention of "My Darling Gale" or "Your Loving Sweetheart, Judy" in any of 'em. In fact, they is no mention of that at all. If I had a boy friend named Judy, why the letters could of been from him as far as hugs and kisses is concerned. Once she sent me a list of books to get so's to "stimulate my imagination." I got 'em all and read most of 'em, with the kind assistance of my dictionary. I even give one of 'em, *Huckleberry Finn,* to Knockout Kelly to read, but after a while he give it back to me and says: "Not so good!" I asked him why and he says they ain't no pictures in it.

In all Judy's letters she kept kind of hinting that while she thinks I'm a nice fellow and all that business,

why, I am not exactly making myself solid with her by staying away from Drew City. This made me the bit uneasy and then I got some letters from Spence Brock which puts on the finishing touches, you might say. Spence writes that the first time I go to the post in New York, his gang from Drew City Prep will have ringside seats to see me do my stuff and likewise that he's positive I will knock my adversus for a Japanese mock turtle. That's fine and I get quite a kick out of knowing that when I step into the ring for my first professional fight, no matter if all the rest of the crowd gives me the razzberry, why they'll be at least two guys pulling for me—Spence Brock and myself. But what's much more interesting to me in Spence's letter is the news that Rags Dempster seems to be sitting pretty with Judy and her mother. He almost lives at the house, says Spence, and right then and there I get all fed up on New York! It wasn't hard to get Nate and Kayo to see things *my* way. Kayo was about winding up his training for his bout with Jackie Frayne and when him and Nate was in Drew City before they rented a barn for training quarters, charged ten cents admission and packed 'em in to see Kayo work out.

"With you, a native son, you might say, and Kayo, working out down in 'at slab together," says Nate to me, "I'll crack the yokels for three jitneys a head and take in nickels like a conductor. Less go!"

And that's what we done.

Judy seems to be tickled silly that I'm back at her house and Mrs. Willcox made the same type of fuss

over me like as if I was her only son, back from the wars and the etc. I'm kind of leary as to what she and Judy will say with the regards to Kayo Kelly and Nate Shapiro as candidates for boarders, as you know what some people thinks of prize fighters, but they both seem willing to take a chance and afterwards they're glad they did. Mrs. Willcox said we cheered the old house up and made her feel young again and it reminded her of years ago when she had a big family and they was all home. This generally made her begin to weep, because all that family had drifted away from her except Judy, which was the baby, and they're either dead or scattered all over the country. All she ever hears from 'em is New Year's and Easter cards and maybe a lace handkerchief by mail at Xmas. Well, whenever this comes up, I pat her on the shoulder and Nate and Kayo Kelly rushes to the old piano in the parlor. In some way, Nate has mastered the mysteries of piano playing and Knockout Kelly throats a wicked semi-glycerine tenor. So the three of us does some close harmony on "Silver Threads Amongst the Gold," "My Old Kentucky Home," and like that, generally winding up with something good and jazzy. Our combination was a sure-fire gloom chaser and that's a fact!

About the second day I'm back at Mrs. Willcox's again, I find out another reason why she and Judy is glad to have us there. I'm talking to Mrs. Willcox before supper one night and it slips out in the conversation that Mrs. Willcox owes somebody a hundred bucks and our board bills is helping her save so much

a week to pay it back. She says the jack was sent to her in a plain envelope without no writing to show who it's from, by somebody which knew she was short a century on a note due at The First National Bank. When Mrs. Willcox says she's pretty sure who sent it, I made a excuse and ducked, as I am the baby which sent her that money. So now I think I won't say a word to her till she has saved up the hundred, and then I'll give her a wonderful surprise. I'll write her a unsigned letter saying that the promising young prize fighter which loaned her the sugar says to keep it—and she'll never know *where* it come from!

A few nights later I happen to pass by the parlor on my ways upstairs to my room and Rags Dempster is in there talking to Mrs. Willcox. As I'm walking by the room he seen me and sneers. Then he tells Mrs. Willcox in a loud voice so's I'll hear it that he thinks she has made a mistake to take in us prize fighters with a young girl in the house. We ain't a good influence for Judy, this fathead says. Why, the big stiff, I would of cut off my arm for Judy, and Nate and Kayo treated her like she was President Harding! I'm glad to say, though, that Mrs. Willcox stuck up for us, so that helped a little. But when I get to the top of the stairs there's Judy just coming down and I get another jolt—a tough one!

Calling Judy the prettiest girl in the wide, wide world is dismissing a million dollars with the remark that it's nice money. Judy begins being beautiful where Venus left off!

I ain't really had a chance to see her alone for more

than a few minutes up to this time and as I had something very important to ask her, I stopped her. A few hours before I had arranged with Spence Brock to borrow his racing car for a couple of hours to take Judy for a ride. Spence would loan me both his ears and one hand if I asked him. So all I got to get now is Judy.

"Can I speak to you for a minute, Judy?" I says.

"Why, of course, Gale," she smiles, making my heart jump till it would of frightened a doctor. "As many minutes as you want."

"You don't seem to want to see much of me any more," I says, thinking of Rags waiting in the parlor. "I guess I've about wore out, hey?"

She goes to work and pinches my arm, but nevertheless why does her face get red?

"Don't be silly!" she says. "I like you immensely, Gale, and you know it—or you should. I'm awfully glad you're back and I hope, that is, I'm glad you've made up your mind to stay. I—we missed you terribly."

She looks away from me, playing with the lace on her sleeve. A wild idea come to me to tell her how cuckoo I am over her and get either kissed or canned, but in any event be done with it! Then I think of that dizzy sap downstairs!

"I *bet* you missed me," I says. "With Rags Dempster hanging around like——"

Judy leaves go a little exclamation which sounds like she expected me to say something entirely different and she's highly disappointed. She cut me off short.

"When are you going to have your first boxing match?" she asks me.

"Next Saturday night in Brooklyn," I says. "Nate Shapiro just told me today and you're the first one *I'm* telling. I'm going to fight a fellow called 'Red' Johns, in a six-round preliminary to the Kayo Kelly—Jackie Frayne battle."

"Oh, Gale, you will be careful, won't you?" says Judy, suddenly grabbing my arm. "What a horrible name—'Red' Johns!"

"Wait till he hears mine," I says. "Six-Second Smith!"

Judy smiles with me.

"Well, at any rate, please try not to get hurt and—and—if you call me up as soon as the bout is over and tell me how you came out, I'll wait up Saturday night for the call!"

"As a special favor to *you,* Judy," I says, "I will certainly try not to get hurt, and that ain't changing my original plans much, at that! And I'll sure phone you Saturday night after the massacre; win, lose, or draw—if I'm able. But if you really like me, Judy, why do you let Rags Dempster——"

No use! Judy derails me again.

"What did you do with that list of books I sent you to New York, and told you to read?" she butts in, pickin' up a book from the table. "Lost it, I'll bet."

"Well, you'd lose!" I says, and I pull her list out of my coat pocket. "Judy, if a five-year-old kid would begin piling on top of each other the books I've read

since I left here, he'd be three hundred years old and in Betelguese when he laid the last one down!"

Judy laughs till it's a wonder Rags didn't hear her downstairs, and I hope he did.

"The ones I liked best," I goes on, checking over the list, "was 'The Three Musketeers,' 'Martin Eden,' 'Poe's Tales,' 'Sherlock Holmes,' and 'Huckleberry Finn.' Like 'em? I *love* 'em! I look on them books as my pals and I'll read 'em again and again. I'd as soon part with them as I would with my knees, especially that 'Huckleberry Finn'!"

"I *thought* you'd like that one," says Judy. "Now you must read 'Tom Sawyer,' another one of Mark Twain's, and——"

"I'm going to read *every* story Mr. Mark Twain writes, as fast as they come out!" I interrupt. "Believe me, he tells a dude of a yarn. I've been boasting him to all my friends, because a man which can write like that deserves some encouragement!"

At this point Judy goes right off into a fit of laughing, which they *do* hear downstairs, and her mother calls her.

"Gale," she says, with her hand on my arm. "Eh—don't—don't say that about Mark Twain to anyone else—that—Oh, about *encouraging* him. Mark Twain is immortal!"

"There was nothing out of the way in the book *I* read," I says.

"Not immoral, *immortal!*" says Judy, getting up, still giggling. "And now I must go, Gale, or mother will be angry. Keep on reading good books. They

will help you immensely now, and, later, when you've begun to make big money at your present profession, you can get yourself a tutor—some one to teach you and lay out a regular course of reading for you—history, fiction, essays, and all that sort of thing. I'll help you study, myself, whenever I have time, especially during vacation this summer. Oh, I do want you to be a success, Gale!" she adds, suddenly serious. "And I know you will! It's written all over your face. As you've said, there's too much fighting blood in you for you to give in to the handicap of your lack of education—you'll never *remain* a prize fighter, Gale, never in this world. Some day I bet you'll be the biggest man I know; and oh—how proud I'll be of you. Why, I'm proud of you *now*, for trying."

At that minute I wouldn't of changed places with Mr. J. D. Rockefeller. The next second I would of changed places with one of his oil cans. Such is girls!

I ask Judy will she take a ride with me, telling her Spence had loaned me his car. For a instant her face lights all up, and then she bites her lips and says she's terrible sorry, but she can't go. She's already got a date with Rags Dempster! While I'm kind of reeling back against the banister and wondering if all my life this Rags is going to come between me and what I want, I hear Judy explaining that some of the students of Drew City Prep is putting on a play at the school auditorium, and, as all the gang is supposed to go, she had accepted a invitation from Rags. More because she really *must* be nice to him than because she wants

to go!" is how she puts it, and then she squeezes my hand and blows.

Well, I sit down on the dark stairway, and it ain't no darker than my chances looks with Judy Willcox! Still and all, why *should* she bother with me? I ain't got a nickel and I don't *mean* nothing. Rags Dempster is the only son of a millionaire. What a chump Judy'd be to even hesitate over a choice there, hey? But I can't get through my head what she means by saying she "really *must* be nice to him!" Then a thought hits me which made me absolutely *sick*, no fooling. Suppose—suppose Judy and Rags is *engaged!*

I don't remember getting my hat or even going out, but the next thing I know I am walking along the street like I'm in a trance. I feel like the whole world has come to a end and I'm the only one left. I'm very much surprised when I look in the mirror of the weighing machine outside Ajariah Stubbs's drug store and see that I ain't as grey-headed as old Ajariah himself!

Stopping in Kale Yackley's cigar store, I got a New York paper and turned to the sporting page to see if they's anything there about my coming battle with Red Johns. A column headed "Frayne and Kelly Await Gong," catches my eye. It's all about how Kayo Kelly has wound up his training at Drew City and Jackie Frayne has knocked off work up in the Bronx, and both "leading contenders for the welterweight title" is on edge for the big fight. The semi-windup will be Battling Young vs. Kid Neil, middleweights. The rest of the card, says the paper, will be composed of

four six-round preliminaries. That's all it says. Not so much as a mention of my name.

And then I get it. I'm going to be in one of them six-round preliminaries; and whoinell is interested in the name of a preliminary boy? It seemed to me that's what I'd been all my life—just a preliminary boy! Well, I determine that I'm going to enter one of Life's Main Events some day, and whether I get knocked cold or not is of much less interest to me than whether I get the bout!

Thinking like this, I spread the paper out on Kale's show case, and it's full of this radio business which the country has went double-cuckoo over. Call XZX, clamp the receiver over your ear and get everything from the baseball scores to grand opera, right out of the air! The guy which doped *that* out was the sparrow's chirp, what? How is it *I* can't figure out something like that? I think I'm beginning to get the Drew City Blues again, so I tossed the paper away and stepped out in the street. Then, of a sudden, I decide to go around to Stubbe's drug store and see how old Ajariah is making out since I left him, by request.

Now here comes a funny thing. When I went into Ajariah's drug store that night, the old man is so disgusted with the way business has fell off that he's about ready to sell the joint for a plugged nickel. A week after that you couldn't of bought that place for fifteen thousand bucks! And it was *me* which give old Ajariah the big idea which turned his store into a gold mine. Believe me, that set me thinking! If I could do that for Ajariah, why couldn't I dope out something

to put *myself* over? Or even go around to stores which is on their last legs like Ajariah's was and sell 'em a idea which would bring the business? I thought this worth looking into and don't think I didn't give myself a crack at it, either. I didn't work all the time with nothing but my *hands*, just because I was a box fighter then!

I found Ajariah back in the prescription room, taking inventory to kill time. He looks gloomy and worried and about ten years older than when I last seen him, which must of made him about 156 years of age. Greeting me with a grunt, he peers suspiciously at me over his glasses. At first, talk comes hard. But finally Ajariah seems glad to get his troubles off his chest to somebody, so he sits down on a stool and we have quite a fanning bee. While he's talking I look around the deserted store and see plenty proof of hard luck. The soda fountain which I used to keep polished till the sparkle hurt your eye, is tarnished and sadly neglected. The crushed fruit sirups has all fermented in dirty glass bowls. The long mirror back of the counter where the bunch from Drew City Prep used to flirt with each other—and with me—is fly-specked and clouded. The whole joint is on the bum, for a fact! When Ajariah growls that he ain't taking in enough jack to pay his ice bill, I believe him. He says he can't understand it—but I can.

In the first place, Ajariah Stubbs knows as much about running a soda fountain as I do about running a submarine. He can draw a glass of root beer and that lets him out. When I worked for him I kept the

fountain decorated with fresh fruits and bottles of stuff which would catch the eye and I was always thinking up new drinks with fancy names, even naming some of the after particularly good customers, which, of course, tickled 'em. I tried to tell the world the idea that it was thirsty and that the stuff I had on tap was the kind it was when it came to quenching. But when I left, the rush from the prep school stopped coming in, because Ajarian wouldn't go out of his way to build their trade. He liked to be what he calls "independent." About the only time you can be independent and be in business, is if you are maybe the only fire extinguisher to sell them in Hades!

Ajarian's biggest mistake was looking on his soda fountain as being about the same kind of a accommodation for his customers as keeping postage stamps. Before he realized that the fountain was his biggest money maker he had killed it dead.

Well, in a few months Ajarian is offering me my old job back at fourteen fish a week—two dollars more than I got before. I told him I was now "Six-Beyond Smith," the welterweight, and my soda-jerking days was over, but I'd see if I couldn't figure something to help him. I should of been off Ajarian for life, as far as that part of it goes, because he was always riding me when I worked for him and he fired me without a second's notice. But Ajarian's a old man and he's up against it, so why should I rub it in?

I'm sitting there thinking just what would build Ajarian's trade up again, when all of a sudden a idea hits me smack between the eyes. Ajarian's droning

away about hard times, when I cut him off sharp and made him listen to me for half a hour. That New York paper I seen in Kale Yackley's cigar store gives me the scheme and I passed it along to Ajariah. I told him to have a radio-receiving set, with one of them big horns on it, hooked up in his store. Then every afternoon between, say, three and five, he could give free radio concerts to his customers from the broadcasting stations in Newark. It would be the first and only one in Drew City, and, of course, everybody's read about radio and they'd be crazy to hear it. Anything *new* will draw a crowd—look at New York, for instance. After he gets his customers inside it's up to Ajariah to make 'em buy, I tell him. For that purpose he wants to hire a first-class, big-town soda jerk, which composes a mean sirup and will mix a cruel drink. A ad in the Newark papers will do the trick. I even wrote on a piece of wrapping paper for Ajariah a couple of signs to have his soda man put up on the mirror back of the fountain: "Try a Radio Sundae!" and "Wireless Phosphate—Something New!"

Well, Ajariah had his radio in four days later and the results made him think I got one ounce more brains than Edison. The Drew City "Sentinel" give the stunt a big write-up and curiosity done the rest. Pretty soon the natives start looking for places in the drug store as early as two o'clock in the afternoon, and —then buy! Besides the soda jerk he got from Newark, Ajariah had to hire Vince Neil to help him out. So that was that!

Not long after this I find out just why Rags Demp-

ster is so unusually popular with Mrs. Willcox and what Judy meant by saying she "Really *must* be nice to him!" If this double-crossing boloney had been within punching distance when I got this information, why, he would of been a total loss inside of two minutes as sure as there's water in Baffin's Bay! *Both Mrs. Willcox and Judy thought that Rags Dempster was the unknown guy which sent them the hundred bucks to pay that note at the bank!* Can you tie that? Here I go and put myself in hock to Nate Shapiro for more dough than I ever seen in my life so's to help Mrs. Willcox out of a hole, and the only enemy I got in the wide, wide world gets the credit for it! If that ain't a tough break, then neither was Battling Siki a tough break for Carpentier. It seems they have doped out that as Rags was the only one of their friends with money which might of knew they was in trouble, why, he must of been the one which sent the dough. They figure he kept his name off it so's not to make 'em feel they was charity patients and him being that thoughtful makes him extry nice. Why, this Rags wouldn't give a dime to hear the inside story of why Washington stood up in that rowboat crossing the Delaware, let alone give anybody a hundred bucks! So when even Judy says she thinks it was very "gallant" of Rags to send her mother the money that way, why, I'm fit to be tied. I can see Judy's pride's hurt at taking money from *anybody* and that she'll be tickled silly when they have saved the hundred to pay it back. I'm getting a pushing around and no mistake, but I get a little consolation when Judy says that Rags

Dempster's the last person in the world she wants to be obligated to. I can easy imagine the advantage that false alarm would want to take of it.

To show you what kind of a bozo this Rags was when both Judy and her mother accuses him of being the mysterious Santy Claus he don't deny it. At first I thought maybe he had sent in a hundred, too, but when Mrs. Willcox shows me the envelope the dough come in I know different!

Well, though I am overboard with rage, I don't show Mrs. Willcox and Judy what a four-flusher Rags is, because that ain't the way I work. The person I want to tell *that* to is Rags Dempster himself. So I go out looking for him without saying a word to nobody. That is, nobody but Lem Garfield.

Passing the Elite Haberdashery I see Lem locking the front door and he calls to me to wait for him.

"Make it snappy, Lem," I says. "I'm looking for Rags Dempster and should I find him they'll be plenty trouble!"

"Humph!" says Lem. "A man in a hurry lookin' for trouble is a man who's sure goin' to git *service!* Don't have to *look* for it, feller kin sit right in his room and trouble'll come to him. Too bad Mr. Opportunity ain't more like Mr. Trouble. They say opportunity knocks once at every man's door; goes away if yew don't answer. Humph! Trouble don't *knock* —Mr. Trouble bust down the door, and if yew ain't in, he waits!"

Then Lem wants to know why I'm gunning for Rags and because I'm just boiling over with the thing, I told

him. Right away, Lem changes from gents furnishings salesman into lawyer, jumping at the chance like he always does to turn loose a flock of legal terms. For about five minutes the air is full of *ipso factor, in re, habeas corpse* and *non vult*. That's all applesauce to me, but as my counsel, Lem finally advises me to lay off Rags till Mrs. Willcox has saved the hundred bucks she thinks she owes him, and then if Rags takes the jack from her we can have him pinched for obtaining money under false pretenses.

"Can't we do nothing to him *now*, for obtaining Judy Willcox's *friendship* under false pretenses?" I says. "That's what I'm interested in!"

"Eh—not legally," says Lem, pursing his lips together like a judge. "I'm afraid the law wouldn't recognize your, now, broken heart, as a *corpus delicti!* You'd have to——"

"Blah!" I cuts him off. "I'll make a corpus out of this Rags myself—maybe the law will recognize *that!*"

Well, the law *did* recognize that, for a fact! Two hours later I am marching over to Judge Tuckerman's court with Constabule Watson, and all the kids in Drew City is trailing after us. I am credited with assault and battery, to the viz., I socked Rags Dempster, and instead of tying into me like a man, why, he squawks for a cop. Me and Lem runs into Rags down near the railroad station. Rags tried to duck me, but I nailed him and politely asked him to tell Mrs. Willcox that she don't have to pinch and squinch every week to get that hundred bucks together for him, because, as

the matter and fact, he never sent her a nickel. Rags gets red and wants to know how do *I* know whether he sent the money or not. I says because *I* am the guy which really done it! This stops him for a minute, then he busts out laughing and says I'll have a fine time *proving* that, because the hundred was sent "anonymously"—whatever that is. So I tell him that I don't want to prove nothing with the regards to myself. For my part, Mrs. Willcox will never know where the sugar came from, but I want him to own up that *he* didn't have nothing to do with it, so's that Mrs. Willcox and Judy won't feel that they're under obligations to him. Well, Lem being there and hearing all this seems to steam Rags up. He lets forth a sneer and says where would a fellow like *me* ever get a hundred dollars? I says I borrowed it—which was true—but Rags says I'm just a tenth-rate liar and I probably stole the money from Ajariah Stubbs while I was working for him.

I choked back some choice remarks which I wanted to make, and asked Rags to put up his hands. He says he wouldn't *lower* himself, so I lowered him with a right hook to the jaw, placing it carefully so's not to mark him. He's a good two inches taller and fifteen pounds heavier than me—but soft, awful soft, and his heart's made of dough. When he got up he blowed a police whistle, and that's why I'm leading the parade to Judge Tuckerman's with Constabule Watson.

The first case before the judge that day is Lafe Weston, charged with selling bootleg in his near-beer saloon.

"How d'ye plead?" growls Judge Tuckerman, squinting at Lafe over his cheaters.

"Jedge," says Lafe, wetting his lips with his tongue, "they ain't been a drop of hard licker in my place since prohibition. This here's nothin' more or less than a put up job!"

"Guilty, eh? I thot so!" barks the judge, paying no attention to Lafe's indignant stare. "Where's the evidence?"

"Constabule Watson puts a bottle on the judge's desk and the judge takes a good long drink.

"Whoosh!" he says, making a terrible face and gulping down about half the water in the pitcher in front of him "Whoosh!" He bangs on the desk with his gavel and Lafe trembles, "You old scoundrel!" bawls Judge Tuckerman, red in the face and trying to get his breath, "What d'ye mean by selling sich stuff as this—d'ye want to poison me? I fine ye——"

Lafe's so scared at the way the judge is gulping and gasping that he must of forgot where he's at. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a flask.

"This here's *real* stuff, Jedge!" he says eagerly, "I ——"

"Ha!" says Judge Tuckerman, grabbing the flask. "More evidence, hey?" He sniffs suspiciously at the flask, takes a long swallow and puts it down, smacking his lips. "Ah!" he says, clearing his throat and looking around the court room. Then his wandering eye falls on the anxious Lafe and he shoves one hand in his pants pocket. "Ah—ptu!" he says, kind of dreamy, "How much is that?"

Lafe gives a start and everybody busts out laughing, which brings the judge back to himself. If his face was red before, you should of saw it now! "Order in the court!" he bawls, banging with his gavel. "What d'ye think this is—a theayter? One more cackle out of you idjits and I'll fine the lot of ye for contempt! Lafe Weston, I fine ye fifty dollars and costs and don't tell this court ye ain't got no money, because that's dern good licker and ye must be gettin' fancy prices for it—if ye ain't, your a dern fule!"

Lafe paid up.

Well, I'm next and I ain't feeling any too good after seeing what a beating the judge give Lafe.

Rags gets up and tells the judge he was walking down the street, minding his own business, when I rushed up and knocked him down. Not a word about what we was arguing over, or what he called me. Judge Tuckerman squints hard at Rags and then he scowls at me.

"In trouble agin, heh?" he says. "What ye got to say for yourself this time?"

"He called me a crook and a liar!" I says, still red-headed.

"Are ye?" says Judge Tuckerman. "Answer yes or no!"

I made a quick step toward the desk, but Lem Garfield pulls me back. He tells Judge Tuckerman he's my "attorney" and likewise a witness for me. Rags jumps up and hollers that Lem is a gents furnishing clerk and not no lawyer, and, besides, he can't be my lawyer and a witness too. Rags was out of luck! The

judge likes Lem for what he done in the war. He's one of the few which ain't forgot. So Judge Tuckerman bangs on his desk with his gavel for silence. After he gets it he asks Lem how he's feeling and did them new goloshes come in from the wholesale house yet, and then he tells him to present my case. When Lem gets through, the judge discharges me, glares at the trembling Rags, and soaks him the costs of my arrest.

"I ought to commit ye to the State insane asylum!" says the judge to Rags while Rags is frisking himself for the fine. "For anybody which calls a prize fighter a crook and a liar to his face is either crazy or has a suicidal mania!"

So that was all settled.

Well, Spence Brock heard I was pinched and he came rushing down to see what he could do for me. Lem Garfield tells him what made me sock Rags and Spence tells Judy in school the next day. All about who sent her mother that life-saving hundred bucks and everything. When I come in from the training camp for supper that night Judy done everything but kiss me and Mrs. Willcox even done that! Rags comes around about eight o'clock to "explain" matters to Judy and she won't even see him, but she sits out in the swing on the back porch with me and we talk over—lots of things. She wanted me to take the sixty-four bucks her mother had already saved up toward the hundred I loaned her, but I says to keep it, and if she will help me with my education this summer in exchange, I'll feel I'm getting the best of it. So that's what she done.

Well, the big day finally arrives when I am to step into a prize ring for the first time in my life. I'll never forget it as long as I live, don't think I will! The night before I went to bed at 8 p. m.—and fell asleep at 4 a.m. I got up for breakfast at 7.30, and in the three and a half hours I slept I fought this "Red" Johns a world's series! In one of the imaginary battles I had with him, he knocked me down fifteen or twenty-one times, hitting me the last time with one of the ring posts. Rags Dempster was referee and Judy Willcox was one of my seconds. Some dream! Knockout Kelly slept like a top as usual and Nate had to drag him out of bed, though he was going to fight the same day. For Kayo's fight with Jackie Frayne he's guaranteed five thousand berries. I'm going to get a hundred and a half for displaying *my* wares in the first preliminary and they's only seventy-five profit in it for me at that, as I got to slip Nate half.

The day of the fight we went up to New York on the 4.00 p. m. local and with us goes half of Drew City. Spence Brock and nearly all the fellows from the prep school comes along to root for me, with pennants and horns like they was going to a football game, except none of the girls is with 'em. I am trying to laugh and kid and act like taking part in a mere prize fight is nothing at all in my young life, but I'm as nervous as a cat on a picket fence. From the time I got up in the morning till the time I stepped into the ring, I feel like I'm on my way to the electric chair and that's a fact! Every little thing which happens that day seems just like the stuff I've read in the papers about guys

which is going to be executed. For instance, at breakfast Nate makes the crack that they's nothing wrong with my appetite, and I think of *"The condemned man ate a hearty meal!"* Then he makes me get my hair cut close so's it won't flop in my eyes when I'm in there trying, and that reminds me of how prisoners' hair is cut when they're going to be bumped off. Mrs. Willcox mentions me in saying Grace at lunch and I feel she's praying for my soul, which is soon to leave me. If one church bell had tolled while I was on my way to the train, I think I would of fainted!

Neither me or Kayo Kelly is allowed to have any supper, but that's no loss to me, because eating is the last thing I'm thinking of. At seven o'clock we are in the dressing room at the club-house and "Shiney" Jepps, the dinge rubber, and Nate is getting me ready for the—eh—ring. I nearly said gallows! The noise of the mob outside in the arena comes in to me like the boom of the ocean on the beach at night. The grimy dressing-room, lit by a couple of dull yellow wire-screened electric lights smells like a hospital ward. Arnica and aromatic spirits of ammonia, I recognize, but they's another smell I don't. It's like ether. "'At's collodion," says Nate, when I ask him. "Stops bleedin'!" I didn't ask him no more questions after that. Stops *bleeding*—woof!

After I've stripped and got into white trunks and ring shoes, Nate wraps a roll of soft bandages around each of my hands. That's to protect the knuckles and give me more of a grip when I'm punching. All the time, him and Kayo keeps up a running fire of kidding

and funny stories, but I can see they're just trying to keep up my spirits, because when Nate laughs, only his lips is care free, the rest of his face is set! And every other word from Kayo Kelly is, "How d'ye feel *now?*" till Nate shuts him up. I can feel that in spite of their joshing, Nate and Kayo and even "Shiney" Jepps, who's kneading my stomach and the back of my neck, is darn serious. You can bet I know that when I walk out there in the ring before that howling mob I ain't going to get no gym workout, I'm going to be in a FIGHT!

Now from all this, maybe you think I'm a trifle yellow and that I was scared stiff. Well, I wasn't scared. If I was faint-hearted, I'd never of took up box fighting to begin with. But you want to remember that all this grim preparation was brand-new to me and where I'd been boxing with Kayo Kelly and my own handlers before a couple hundred people at the most and nearly all of which knew me, I was now going out in a strange town before eight or nine thousand hard-boiled fight fans, which never heard of me before in their lives. When I start down the close-packed aisle to the ring with Nate and my seconds, I want to tell you I was a bundle of hair-trigger nerves and if somebody had of blowed a auto horn behind me I'd of jumped right clear through the roof!

I hear every word about me on that trip down the aisle, the longest trip I ever took in my life. "Who's 'at guy?" "He looks pale!" "Not so good—this 'Red' Johns is a terrible gorilla, he'll *murder* 'at kid!" All that and more, stinging me like red-hot needles.

Climbing through the ropes, I stumbled and lost my balance and the customers howls. "Fall through 'em, kid, you'll git *knocked* through 'em in a minute!" and —some other stuff, which I bet none of them babies would of dared said to my face if they was alone. The glaring lights over the ring, after the gloomy dressing room, blinds me, and it's a couple of minutes before I can see where I'm at. Tobacco smoke is drifting over the ropes till breathing is quite the feat. Nate guides me over to the rosin box and I rub my shoes in it, so's I won't slip in ducking a punch or trying to land one. The next stop is in "Red" Johns's corner, where he's already awaiting, covered with a dirty red bathrobe and surrounded by his handlers. He never even looked up when Nate bends over to examine his bandages and holds my hands up so's his seconds can see mine. But *I* looked at "Red" Johns with great interest! I see a carrot-headed, bull-necked assassin, with hair on his chest so thick I thought at first he was wearing a red sweater. His nose is almost flat on his face. A tough-looking baby if they ever was one, I'll tell the cross-eyed world!

I'm just back in my corner, staring out at a crowd which would make it look like they was only two guys at the Battle of the Marne, when Nate pulls my mouth open and shoves in a rubber teeth protector.

"Don't swalley 'at!" he grunts, beginning to lace on my gloves. "Now remember, this chump's a sucker for a straight left. Don't go rushin' out there to trade swings with him, or he'll flatten you! Jab his head off with 'at left first, then cross your right. You *lead*

with your right to this guy and he'll goal you sure!"

The gong rings a half dozen times and the crowd quiets down. People is still coming in. Some is carrying on conversations with their backs to the ring. What do they care about the prelims! The announcer raises his hand.

"Over here, 'Red' Johns of Brooklyn. In the other corner, 'Six-Second Smith, eh—" he grins, "—the Drew City Cave man! One hundred and forty-five pounders. Six rounds!"

The mob has begun on me before I'm halfways to the middle of the ring for the referee's instructions. "Where d'ye get that 'Six-Second' stuff?" "He means he'll *last* six seconds!" By this time I'm so up in the air I don't know if I'm in Brooklyn or Brazil! "Red" Johns leers at me. I'm trembling and tingling all over and I can't stop it and that makes me crazy mad at myself. This "Red" Johns looks like he feels the only way he can lose is for me to pull a gun from my shoe and shoot him. He's been through this a hundred times—this is my *first*. Somebody's yelling: "Hey, Gale! Hey, Gale!" I peer through the smoky haze over the ropes and I see Spence Brock, jumping up and waving a pennant. In the box with him is Rags Dempster and some of the other boys from the prep school.

I'm goofy, no fooling, but I manage to wave back my glove. I don't know what it's all about—I'm in a trance. Rags curls his lip and whispers to the fellow next to him and then they both laugh. I go up in the air a couple of thousand feet more. *"Knocked cold*

in my first fight before Rags Dempster!" begins running through my crazy mind. I can picture him telling Judy how it happened. I don't hear half what the referee's saying, but he winds up with: "Fight hard, hit clean, and break when I tell yuh!" A hoarse whisper hits my ear: "I'll spill you in a minute, you big hick." . . . That's Mr. "Red" Johns, and while he's saying that he's shaking my glove with his, very politely. You should of saw his face—like a tiger's! Well, this about ruins me. I go back to my corner and Nate whips off my bathrobe, then slips down under the ropes, leaving me all alone under them terrible lights—all alone except for the hard-faced referee leaning against the ropes, and "Red" Johns with his back to me across the ring. "Red" Johns has got hold of the top rope with his gloves and he's bending up and down, limbering his leg muscles. I just stand there facing the mob and I see nothing but a howling jumble of blurred, cold sneering faces. Nate shoves his head up under the lower rope:

"Remember, make him come to you—don't go after *him.* And what ever you do, *don't lead with 'at right!"*

I hear this "Don't lead with your right!" over and over again, but I'm thinking of what depends on me winning my first start, of Judy, of that sneering Rags out there, and then, to show you how cuckoo I am, I puzzle over what part of a minute is six seconds, that being my ring name. Thoughts is shooting through my head like a news-reel movie being run too fast. I get on one thought and another one blurs it out. Can I last six rounds? Can I keep this scowling, hairy

cannibal away from me that long? Then I think *this* —why try to keep him *away* at all? Why not rush right in and——

The bell clanged out and I jumped a foot! The mob's yelling its head off again. I shot out of my corner like a bullet from a rifle and now my mind's clear of all but one idea and that's to knock "Red" Johns cold and do it swift! All the careful instructions which Nate hammered into me for three weary, heart-breaking months of training is gone and forgotten. He might as well of told me *nothing*. I forget that Nate says leading with my *right* leaves me open to a fatal counter. My first—and last—punch in that fight was a right hook to the jaw. It socked against Red Johns's quickly upraised glove. It drove that glove back against his chin with a loud "Zop!" and Red Johns crashed to the canvas. I put so much stuff on that wallop that the force of my own swing carried me halfways across the ring and I had to jump to miss stepping on Red Johns's body.

The crowd's standing up on the chairs, screeching like cats and dogs and I hear the whistles and horns the gang from Drew City brung with 'em. The referee shoves me against the ropes and begins counting. At "eight," Red Johns kind of quivered, rolled over on his stomach, then stretched out flat. The referee grabs my wrist and holds my arm up to the crowd.

I have trained three months for a fight which lasted just sixteen seconds.

I was reaching down to help Red Johns's handlers carry him to his corner, when Nate jumps through the

ropes and grabbed me away. Nate is terrible excited. He don't know what he's doing. He throws his arms around me and *kissed* me; can you beat that?

"Sweet Mamma, what a socker you turned out to be!" Nate bellers. "You're the bee's knees, for a fact! But you do what I tell you hereafter, get me? You lead with your right to anybody again and I'll crown you with a bucket!"

He throws me bathrobe around me and we walk over to Red Johns's corner. Red's come to, but they still got ammonia under his nose. He just found out he was stopped with a punch and he's crying like a baby. I go to shake hands with him and he pushes my glove away.

I got plenty applause leaving the ring, but I just remember *that* now. Right then, I'm still hypnotized, I can't believe I'm awake! I phoned Judy from the box office of the fight club. I just says: "Well, I won!" and hung up—I squared myself with her later. I tell you I'm still goofy and—terrible sleepy! I didn't even wait to see how Knockout Kelly made out with Jackie Frayne. I went right to the hotel where I was to stay overnight with Nate and Kayo and went to bed, clothes and all.

The next morning I bought a copy of every New York paper printed and took 'em up to my room in the hotel. I figure they'll be full of how I win my first battle. Well, on the sporting pages they's about a column on the Kayo Kelly-Jackie Frayne muss. It seems they fought a tame ten-round draw. Down at the bottom, it says this:

"Six-Second Smith, a newcomer around these parts, stopped Red Johns with a punch in the opening frame of the first preliminary. They are welterweights. Red waited too long!"

One of the biggest events of my life is just a laugh to the Big Town sport writers! But I can still see Red Johns hitting that mat. He kind of bounced a little, then settled down flat on his back, and under them terrible lights his face is like wet chalk. I sit there on my bed and wonder how long it'll be before I'll be laying flat on by back under the lights, with my face looking like wet chalk?

ROUND FOUR

TWO STONES WITH ONE BIRD

MAYBE you think a fellow which will go to work and pay twenty-five bucks for a box of writing paper for *himself* is cuckoo, and maybe he is. But, honest, I wish you could of curled a eye over this stationery. It was the eel's ankle, no fooling! Take this paper itself —lobster red—and across the top in purple letters which you could press down with your fingers it said this:

SIX-SECOND SMITH, NEE GALE GALEN

LEADING CONTENDER FOR WORLD'S MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLE

THE IDOL OF PROMOTERS AND FIGHT FANS

Why?	*A Few Victims*
He's always in shape.	Red Johns, K. O. 1 Rd.
He fights clean.	Fred Nixon, K. O. 1 Rd.
He hits hard and often.	Young Fisher, Won 3 Rds.
He's always trying.	Kid George, K. O. 1 Rd.
He doesn't want all the money.	Shifty McTague, Won 1 Rd.
He will box any boy at 158 lbs.	Battling Lee, K. O. 8 Rds.

His Manager, Nate Shapiro.
His Motto: "Dieu et Mon Droit!"

DREW CITY, N. J., , 19 .

Besides this, in the upper right-hand corner there was a picture of me in my evening clothes—ring togs

—and if that ain't a nifty letter head, then Dempsey's a traffic cop! I thought that letter head all out myself and Nate said it was the greatest business getter he ever seen since he'd been handling box fighters and that's been since a right hook was a punch. Why, Nate never sent out a letter to a fight club on this paper that it didn't pull *some* kind of a answer, even if the matchmaker only wished to know where could he get the music for it.

What I particularly idolized about this letter head was my motto, "DIEU ET MON DROIT!" That means "God and my Right!" and it was the slogan of a two-handed fighter named Richard I, which besides having that last name with only one letter in it, once held down the exacting job of King of England. Well, I never was King of England, but still and all I decided that "Dieu et mon droit!" would make a swell battle cry for me and a wonderful motto to live up to. Mrs. Willcox had taught me a lot about the Bible and I said my prayers every night and went to church with her and Judy every Sunday and I ain't ashamed to admit it neither. So that's why I was strong for the first part of that motto. As for the last part, ". . . and my Right!", well, that was made to order for *me*. I don't know how much of a socker Richard I was with his right, but I know that *my* right made me a world's champion and you can't laugh *that* off!

Well, after winning my first fight with a punch I stopped six other good boys in from one to eight rounds each and I was no more ashamed of that record than Napoleon was of his business. But I'm still de-

termined that the minute I get the price of a education the prize ring's loss will be the world's gain! I had nothing against box fighting; as far as that part of it goes, I got quite the kick out of it. But how many scrappers is making a living at their trade at forty, for the example. How many which is out of the game is living on Well Fixed Avenue?

While you're puzzling over that brain teaser, I'll get back to Judy, and who wouldn't? Judy was now my chief second in this finish fight I begin with Battling Ignorance, and during her vacation that summer from Drew City Prep, she taught me this and that. We had reading and writing, arithmetic and spelling, history and geography, grammer and hot chocolate when school's over. Ain't we got fun! If I had learned what is the difference between a verb and a pronoun as fast as I learned to fall into love with this sweet little eye-widener, why, I could of went up to Yale and made a monkey out of the entire college!

Well, after four fights as a welterweight, me and Nate makes the sad discovery that I can't make the poundage in that division no more because I'm growing like a baby elephant. The best I can get down to at that time is 158 ringside and it takes a two days' drying out to do that. So I was then a full-fledged middleweight, not that this entitled me to carry a sword and rate a salute or anything like that. My four scuffles as a welter nets me around five hundred bucks after Nate takes out his half and I square for the jack he advanced me to live on before I have my first fight.

In them four battles I am trading wallops less than a half hour altogether—the first one only goes sixteen seconds—and my gross receipts is just $1,200. When Nate picks me from behind Ajariah Stubbs's soda fountain, I have to work twelve hours a day for *two* years to click off twelve hundred smackers! Honest, I felt like the laborer which win fifty dollars the first time he ever bet on a horse race in his life and says in astonishment: "How long has *this* been going on?"

One of the first things I done when the money begin to roll in like this was to get myself *two* swell suits of clothes, a complete and classy outfit of gents furnishings and a hundred-buck diamond ring. The rest opens a savings account and I put on no more dog from then until I had a real bankroll. But this first plunge I simply had to take and that's a fact. All my life I had wanted to have two suits of clothes—one for every day and one for when I'm stepping out. Then that diamond—it was a pip, too—well, that was simply another case of must have! It gives a fellow a air of—eh—but you get me, don't you?

On my nineteenth birthday Nate signs me up with a sapolio called Shifty McTague for my first start as a middleweight. Ten rounds at Irontown, Pa., for a guarantee of $600 if I stay the limit. If on the contrary, I get paid at the rate of $50 a round, and no tips. McTague, a big favorite in Irontown, is to get a thousand bucks flat even should I smack him for a mock turtle, which I don't mind telling you is what I intended to do, no matter what his own plans is for re-

maining erect. This bout was the main event of a card put on for the hired help by the heavy bosses of the Irontown Locomotive Works, to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of the choo-choo factory. The merry ironworkers had a two-day holiday of track and field sports, winding up with the boxing show, while the bosses done *their* setting-up exercises at a banquet table.

We signed the articles in Lefty Mullen's gym in New York. Both me and Shifty McTague agree to make 158 at two o'clock the day of the quarrel.

"I don't seem to of *heard* much about this boy of yours," says the matchmaker to Nate, looking at me kind of suspicious. "Is he tough?"

"Is he *tough?*" grunts Nate. "This McTague boloney will think he's tough when 'at bell rings, don't think he won't. Why, this kid had on a pair of boxin' gloves the first day he's alive!"

"I hope he's tough," says the matchmaker gloomily. "Because should he *not* be tough, he'll have on a pair of boxin' gloves the *last* day he's alive too!"

"Blah!" sneers Nate. "Be yourself! Who did this McTague ever kill?"

"I ain't talkin' about *McTague,*" says the matchmaker. "I'm busy thinkin' about them ironworkers, which will expect the Battle of Gettysburg once them two boys come out of their corners. If your battler can't take it, they'll cook him sure. That goes for McTague too. I don't care how tough your boy thinks he is, them ironworkers is Tough itself! If *I* was the two kids which is goin' up there to do their stuff, I'd

rather git my nose broke by a boxin' glove than git my skull broke by a crowbar. Yes, sir, them kids better be a couple of two-fisted maniacs, that's all *I* got to say!"

He said too much as it was, hey?

On the way back home I can't think of nothing at all but them ironworkers, and I must say that the idea of battling a locomotive works single-handed don't appeal to me at all. I had already fought before the kind of sportsmen which thinks every fight where both boys ain't cut and slashed to ribbons is a frame-up between a couple of room mates and I know what me and this Shifty McTague will be up against, if we don't half kill each other. Nate says the matchmaker was just trying to give me a pushing around, and to forget all about it, because this scrap will be the same as any other.

But it wasn't!

When we get back to Drew City I go right up to my room. That's something I wish you could of saw, no fooling! I had it fixed up swell, and, as Nate said, there was about everything in it but a race track and a swimming pool. On the floor was one of the rugs they turn out in Drew City, N. J., and ship to the Indians to sell out West, and I had so many pictures on the walls you couldn't see the paper. Besides fighting photos of me in a dozen different menacing poses, there was pictures of Dempsey, Leonard, Lynch, Carpentier, the gentleman socker, and nearly all the other champs and near champs. I cut them all out of *The Police Gazette* and they's only one other place I rather

of had my own picture than in *The Police Gazette* and that's in Judy's locket!

Mrs. Willcox hollered about my art gallery at first on the account she says pinning them pictures on the wall spoils the paper. So then I take out the pins and went to work and *paste* all the pictures on the wall. Well, the dear old lady just throws up her hands, but says nothing, because I was the star boarder and star boarders has got to be gave certain liberties.

Well, although this was my nineteenth birthday, I don't feel so good, for a fact. In the first place, there's them ironworkers which expects a race riot when me and Shifty McTague mingles; in the second place, it's one of them dark, foggy, rainy days which would give Mr. Happy himself the blues; and, in the third place, nobody ain't even wished me a merry birthday—not so much as a post card have I got so far!

For the want of something to do I get out a pile of my pictures and a pen and ink and commence writing "Yours Truly, Six-Second Smith" on 'em, so's I'll have a lot ready when I'm champion and the public commences to clamor for my autograph photo. But my mind ain't on the thing and after a while I give it up. The steady rattle of rain on the windows and the steady rattle of thoughts on my brain gets me plenty nervous, so I begin shadow boxing, slamming my right over on the air and making out I'm clouting this Shifty McTague. Every now and then I stop in front of the mirror and fall into my famous fighting crouch which I copied from Dempsey. I look at his face in the picture on the wall and I notice he's got a

fierce scowl on him, so I scowl too. Standing there with my head lowered, my left hand out, my noted right pulled back for the sleep producer and a horrible frown on my face, I get kind of fascinated by what a ringer I am for Dempsey right then!

Then I hear a giggle.

I had left the door open for Nate, but Nate ain't no giggler. Dropping my hands, I swing around like a flash and—there's Judy, looking at me and laughing her head off. She's just come in from the storm and her raincoat is dripping water, which even glistens on her breath-taking face. The room is dark and gloomy but Judy standing there in the doorway lights it up like a cathedral.

Every time I look at this girl a epidemic of wishing hit me which would made it look like Aladdin's requests was modest! Well, when I realize that Judy's been standing there for some time and has seen me posing in front of the mirror and taking wallops at the air, why, I feel like a sap. I can tell my face is getting so red it must of looked like somebody hit me with a throwing tomato.

"Many happy returns of the day!" smiles Judy and whisks a bundle from behind her back. Without another word she hands it to me and blows.

I tear the paper off this bundle and my fingers seems to be nothing but thumbs. The idea that Judy has thought of me at all on my birthday has got me so excited that if they's nothing in this package but a cast-iron hair brush I'll be highly satisfied. But it's something all soft and padded and silk, till at first I

think she has made a mistake and I'm in the ladies' wear department. Then I stand up and shake it out and the next minute I let forth a whinney of joy. It's a bathrobe for me to wear into the ring, and Judy couldn't of got me nothing better if she had sit up all night to dope it out!

And, oh, what a knockout this bathrobe was! On the breast pocket she has went to work and sewed "G. G." in red silk. The bathrobe itself is blue, and then I remember only the other day Judy asks me what's my favorite color, and I look at her and she's dressed in blue from head to foot, so you know what color I says is my pet. Well, first I close the door tight and then I take hold of that monogram which Judy's little fingers has sewed on and I kiss it—go ahead and laugh your head off, you never seen Judy! Then I try it on over my clothes, and if I ain't the turkey's elbow when I'm inside this bathrobe, then they's only two Frenchmen in Paris the year round!

I'm just going downstairs to find Judy and ply her with thanks, when Knockout Kelly comes into the room. I showed him the present I got from Judy. He admires it plenty and says if he was me he wouldn't pay no attention to the razzing I'll get the first time I walk down the aisle to the ring in a fight club with a baby blue silk bathrobe on. While I'm thinking this one over, Kayo tells me to wait a minute and goes to his room. He comes back with a peach of a white sweater and throws it on my bed. "There's one more birthday present, kid," he grins. "Of course, alongside of that —eh—kimono Miss Willcox give you, why my present

don't mean nothin'. But maybe tomorrow I'll give you somethin' else."

He did that thing. The very next morning when me and Kayo is sparring, he give me a split lip.

Well, I find Judy in the parlor wielding a cruel knitting needle, and I go over and sit down beside her. "Judy," I says, "that bathrobe is immense and I don't know how to thank you!"

"Don't try," smiles Judy. "Does it fit you?"

"Like the skin on a grape!" I says. "What would you like for Christmas?"

Judy laughs and drops the knitting; which tickles me, as watching them flying needles gets me nervous as a cat. "What would I like for Christmas?" she says. "Why, this is July!"

"Well, what's the nearest holiday, then?" I says.

Judy picks up this knitting again, passing up my inquiry of even date. "How are you coming along with your reading, Gale?" she asks.

"Great!" I says. "I sit up all hours last night reading the most thrilling book ever wrote. All about Indians, Cannibals, sharks, Bowie knives, beheadings, gem cutting——"

"Gale!" Judy interrupts, the bit reproachful. "That sort of thing isn't going to help you. You've been reading a dime novel!"

"Well," I says, "you recommended it to me yourself."

"*I* recommended nothing like that? What's the name of that book?"

"Encyclopedia," I says. "What are you laughing

at? I know you think that name is phoney, and I made it up myself, but that's where you're wrong, Judy. I'll go right upstairs and get that book now and——"

"Oh, I believe you," says Judy. "But I just put an encyclopedia on your list for a reference book. What did you look up in it?"

"I looked up *everything,*" I says. "Believe me, Judy, I didn't skip *nothing!* I started at the A's and I wind up at the Z's and now I'm on my second journey around the circuit and enjoying every inch of the trip."

"You funny boy!" says Judy, trying out another giggle.

"Much obliged!" I says, slightly steamed. "Judy, I know you think I'm cuckoo to sit up half the night reading a encyclopedia. I suppose to most people the average encyclopedia is about as exciting as a rainy Sunday night down on the farm. Well, it's different *here.* Why, Judy, a fellow like me which is just dying to know what it's all about, can have the time of his life with a good thick encyclopedia. This here ain't just a book to me, it's a pal, what I mean! It's wised me up to things which I never heard tell of before, or if I did hear of 'em, they didn't mean nothing. It's——"

"I hope you'll remember what you're reading, Gale," butts in Judy. "And store all that away in your mind to be called forth when needed. Don't skip what you don't understand—just mark those places and I'll go over them with you later. That, you know," she adds with a smile which goals me as usual—*"that* is what you're paying me for."

Well, here and there they may be some professors which *knows* more than Judy, but I'll tell the slant-eyed world I had the best-*looking* teacher in captivity, and that's a fact!

"I notice you don't go to the movies with Mr. Knockout Kelly and Mr. Shapiro any more at night," remarks Judy, after a minute.

"Judy," I says, "them babies don't want to get nowheres—I *do!* Let *them* play the movies, I'll stay home with my encyclopedia. Think of being able to get the low-down on stuff like Feudalism, The Spanish Inquisitives, Anaesthasia, Capital Punishment and Sponge Fishing, all in the same night! Can the movies tie that?"

But Judy's laughing again and that gets my animal.

"Listen," I says. "Maybe you think a leather pusher which spends his nights off studying this kind of stuff is a sap, because they will hardly ever be a time in the middle of a fight when the other scrapper will stop socking to ask: "What does feudalism mean, kid?" or anything like that. Well, *I* don't think I'm no sap for trying to make something out of myself, Judy. If I can't go to no university, I can at least get a home-made education and I can pick up a couple of pennants and a college yell anywheres!"

With that I get up and start out of the room, but Judy jumps up too, dropping the knitting on the floor and laying her hand on my arm.

"Indeed, I'm not laughing at your studying, Gale," she says seriously, making me turn around so's I'm facing her. "I—you have such a—a—funny way of

putting things, I can't help laughing at some of the things you say. I—you are so different from any of the boys that—well, I'm not sure that isn't one of the reasons I like you. I have a deep and sincere admiration for your determination to make something out of yourself, as you put it, and I know, I'm *positive* you will! You won't be able to help yourself, Gale, you're *fated* to succeed—I—just *feel* it. Why, look what you've accomplished since you first came to Drew City. You won't be a prize fighter long, and then——"

"Listen, Judy," I butt in—I got a one-track mind. "Just now when you started to talk you said you *liked* me. Does that go?"

Her face gets a deep scarlet, and, gee, but it's becoming! Now it's her turn to look the other way and I'm just slowly turning her around and who knows *what* might of happened, when Nate pushes aside the portieres and walks into the room. Nate's own mother don't like him no more than I do, but right then I could of smacked him for a Russian picalilli plate and had a clear conscience! Judy, of course, ducked immediately.

"Did I bust up anything?" grins Nate.

"Why don't you blow your horn?" I growls. "No, you didn't bust up nothing, because there's nothing to bust up, but if——"

"But if I had put off coming in here till tomorrow I wouldn't of got nobody sore!" Nate cuts me off, still grinning. He takes a little box out of his pocket and hands it to me. "Merry Birthday!" he says, slapping me on the back. "'At's the best I could get you.

They's twenty-seven jewels in 'at watch and no two alike. It set me back seventy iron men. You lose it or bust it and I'll make you hard to catch! I made it the point not to get your initials put on it, because you may git up against it some day and want to hock it and you can git more sugar on it if it ain't initialed."

"You think of everything, don't you?" I says.

But I only get sarcastic because I don't want Nate to see my *real* feelings. Imagine this ten-minute egg giving me a present! And this watch Nate give me is plenty timepiece, too, don't think it wasn't. All it needed was Judy's picture in the back of the case and I get that the same night. While I'm thanking Nate over and over again, he pulls *The Police Gazette* out of his pocket, and, folding back a page, hands it to me.

"Here's a laugh!" he says, "Lamp this bozo—it says he'll be the next middleweight champ!"

Well, I look at the page Nate points to and—say, I feel almost like I felt the first time I ever knocked anybody cold. There's a picture of *me* in ring togs in *The Police Gazette,* where Dempsey and Leonard and all them guys gets their pictures printed!

But that ain't all. Spence Brock gives me a scarf pin, Shiney Jepp, the dinge rubber, hands me a new pair of purple silk trunks with a red monogram, and to top off the day, Mrs. Willcox puts on a big birthday dinner with chicken, lobster salad, mince pie, etc., and she bakes a cake for me with nineteen candles on it. Some birthday!

The next day is Sunday and Nate lets me off from the grind at our camp because, for one thing, my spar-

ring partners needs the rest, and for another thing, Nate don't want me trained too fine for this Shifty McTague. Kayo Kelly, getting romantic, hires a car and takes Mary Ballinger, the stenog at the Commercial House, for a trip to the Trenton Fair. Spence Brock calls around for me in his racer and me and him takes a long ride in the country. When Spence got through Drew City Prep that year, why he went to Princeton to get colleged and when he come out it didn't make no difference if all he learned was to yell, because his old man has $4.75 for every Spaniard in Madrid. Pretty soft, hey? Well, I didn't envy Spence and you can believe that or not, just as you like. I don't know as I'd wanted to of been born rich, because then I'd have nothing to shoot at, what I mean. Being born poor, I've had to hustle all my life and that's kind of give me the hustling habit. Anyway, me and Spence went everywheres together except places where grammer, family, and bank roll is all you got to have, but you must have *that!*

Well, this day we're clicking off the miles on the state road with me driving, because I sure liked to operate this speed demon of Spence's and the talk swings around to "Rags" Dempster. But to show you what a cheap squawker this Rags is, Spence tells me he has just welshed on a bet with him. It seems that Spence, which thinks I can take Dempsey, bet Rags two hundred and fifty bucks I would win my last scrap by a knockout. Well, that melee was with Kid George at Philly, and after I knock the Kid down four times in the first round, why, the referee stops the fight to

save Kid George from further punishment. Personally, I'm glad he does stop it, as I don't want to hit this game boy no more, but Rags won't pay Spence off because he claims it wasn't a clean knockout. Can you imagine a cheater like that? Everybody in the world knows that a fight stopped that way counts the same as a knockout, but this Rags insists that the bet go over to my next fight, which is the one with Shifty McTague, thereby giving himself two chances to win the bet.

Well, when I see how Rags is trying to gyp Spence out of his two hundred and a half I get red-headed and I tell Spence I will flatten Shifty McTague if I have to hit him with the bucket!

"Don't worry, Gale," laughs Spence, "you won't have to do that, you hit too hard with your hands! I'll bet a year or so from now I'll be going around saying: 'Six-Second Smith, the world's champion middleweight? Oh, yes, I know him well. We used to be chums in——-'"

"Do you think you'll be saying we *used to be* chums, Spence?" I cut in, "I mean, is the fact that I'm a prize fighter going to wind you and me up?"

Spence is half turned away and beginning to laugh, but he breaks off and swings around to me in a flash.

"Is that the way I strike you, Gale?" he asks quietly.

Well, after a look into his fine brown eyes I'm ashamed of myself, no fooling!

"No, Spence," I says, "That *ain't* the way you strike me—and I'm sorry I made that crack!"

Spence shows me all his nice white teeth again.

"Gale," he goes on, kind of impulsive, "I wish you'd let me bring you up to the house some time to meet dad. Now, wait—you'd like him and he'd like you! He's a regular fellow, is dad, and he'd be pleased that we're friends. With one or two exceptions, he loathes the rest of the fellows in our crowd, says they're a lot of spineless young jellyfish—that's the mildest term he uses for them! He's a boxing enthusiast, too—goes to all the championship fights, to mother's supreme disgust. He's tried to sneak me along with him a couple of times, but mother's put her foot down and that—er—ends it. There was a young riot over me going to see you fight that Red Johns and——"

"They'd be *two* young riots if you ever brought *me* up to your house, Spence," I grins. "'Father, meet my friend Six-Second Smith, the prize fighter.' Woof!"

Spence laughs, but immediately turns serious again. "You're simply scared because dad has a lot of money," he says. "And I suppose 'Spencer-Brock' as a surname sounds terrifying. Well, Gale, as a matter of fact, our name is actually just Brock. Spencer is mother's family name, and she and my sisters are responsible for the hyphenated arrangement. Dad is really plain John T. Brock, and he made his money originally in—in the manufacturing business. There! No 'born to the purple' or any of that nonsense about that, is there? My mother and sisters would flay me alive if they knew I told anyone this, but I want to set you right on dad. I've told him lots about you, Gale, how you're educating yourself and how you've struggled for a foothold in life. The way you've made

your own way since you've been a child interests him immensely. Those things always do. Dad loves a fighter and——"

"He might love a fighter, Spence," I butt in. "But a *prize* fighter would be different! Even if he is a fight fan, he's also a rich millionaire and he'd no more want me up at his home than he'd want a horse in his parlor if he was a nut on racing. No, Spence, I don't want to meet your father yet. Let's wait till I get out of the ring and mean something—wait till you can take me up to the house without making any excuses for me, get me? If you brought me up there now, the chances is your mother and sisters would yell murder and forbid you to go with me any more. And don't say nothing to your father about me being a scrapper, because the minute he hears that he'll bust up our friendship as sure as they's a touch of tomato in catsup!"

So we drop that subject, but three weeks later Spence's father himself brings it up with a crash!

The following day, Rags Dempster shows up at the training camp with a bunch of his dumbell friends. If I had saw them first they never would of set foot over the threshold, but Nate's got their Jack and they're inside before I know it. The first I'm aware that I'm performing for the benefit of my only known enemy is when Tommy O'Ryan, a sparring partner, stabs me on the nose with a straight left. This starts a slight flow of claret—nothing to be alarmed about and all in the day's work at a training camp. So I just wipe my nose with my glove and continue on, not even floor-

ing Tommy for the benefit of the audience, as some guys would of did then and there. I never did believe in beating up a sparring partner which is merely doing what you hire him for when he clouts you. But Rags sees this blood on my face and he howls with joy. So does his friends. The mere sound of Rags Dempster's voice throws me off balance, and Mr. Thomas O'Ryan, a mean hitter, socks me on the sore beak again, this time to my great annoyance, I must say. The red ink starts afresh and so does Rags. He hollers to Tommy to flatten me and he'll give him a hundred bucks, pulling out a bill and waving it around.

Tommy grins, knowing I'm pulling my own punches, and, not even getting action for his money, Rags begins making cracks about me which would make my father turn over in his grave if he thought I was taking 'em. Stepping away from Tommy, I make one lunge at Rags, missing him by a bare inch through being over anxious and excited. The way his friends go through that door would of made me laugh if I hadn't been so crazy mad. Rags's face is the color of cream as he starts on the lam for the great outdoors with me after him, all business. Two-Punch Jackson runs over and grabs Rags just as he's going through the exit, when Nate comes to life. He bawls Jackson to let Rags go and then he swings around on me.

"Where d'ye get 'at stuff?" he bellers. "You got light bandages on—suppose you sock 'at jobbie on the head and break a bone in your hand? 'At would lay you up for a couple of months, wouldn't it? You do your battlin' in the ring, where you git *paid* for your

trouble! This fightin' for nothing is out, git me? Let the stevedores do 'at stuff. Next time somebody calls you names, make out you don't know 'em!"

Well, as the time for this scuffle with Shifty McTague draws near, Nate cuts my workouts down to a few rounds light sparring and a two-mile run with a rubdown every day. This gives me quite a little time to myself, and I use it in trying to get a line on what I'm good at, if anything, apart from box fighting. I'm still cuckoo over this encyclopedia and I pester Nate and Kayo Kelly to read it till they're fit to be tied! Nate says he'll start in on the encyclopedia the minute he gets through reading the telephone book. He can't stop now, he says, because he's right in the middle of a chapter called "Pay Stations," and it's as exciting as being chased by a grizzly. Kayo says any doctor will tell you that reading is bad for the eyes, adding that he bets I'm selling encyclopedias as a side line.

That crack of Kayo's gives me a large idea. Why *not* sell encyclopedias as a side line? I got to try my luck at *something,* unless I want to wind up as a pork-and-bean pug, which I didn't, by no means! The more I think about it, the more I get hopped up on the idea. I figure that once the people of Drew City finds out what a swell novel a encyclopedia is, why, they'll sell like ice water would sell on the Sara Desert. Judy gets all excited too when I put the matter up to her, and Spence slaps me on the back and says he'll take at least one set without looking!

That decides me. I get a set of encyclopedias for

samples from New York, and, woof—I'm a book agent!

I only wish I could say that from that time on I simply rolled in wealth and I could say it for that matter, but I might as well tell the truth. It seems Drew City was not quite ripe for a encyclopedia shower and I am too late by quite a few years in discovering what a gold mine of knowledge one of them books is. I might as well of been selling noses—nearly everybody had one! The few which didn't, think the bargain price of ninety-eight bucks is the same kind of a bargain that paying a thousand dollars for a cruller would be and they shooed me away. Even my warmest admirer, viz., myself, had to admit that as a book agent I'm a fairly good box fighter. However, this flop don't discourage me from the art of salesmanship by no means. I simply picked the wrong article for my talents, that's all. It wasn't long before I took a flyer at this game again, but with something else for sale and under different conditions. I'm what you call a trying fool!

The night before I left for Irontown to fight Shifty McTague, me and Judy sat out on the back porch and talked about this and that. I promise I'll phone her the minute the massacre's over, like I always did, no matter where the bout is held. Mrs. Willcox usually waited up to get the returns from me too. While we're sitting there, who comes driving up to the house but Rags. As Judy made no attempt to get up and fall on his neck or the like with welcome, why, he rings the bell, and the next minute Mrs. Willcox lets him in the

parlor. She is a dear old lady and treats me like a son, but I sure wish she hadn't let Rags Dempster's money make such a difference in those days. No matter what Rags done, Mrs. Willcox didn't seem able to convict him when she remembers that his father owns the big carpet factory. However, I had no kick coming then, because I'm out there alone on the porch with Judy, and at least one of us is enjoying it, when along comes Nate. Without no preliminaries he tells me it's nine o'clock and time all good little fighters was in bed, especially one which is going to do his stuff the following night. Arguing with Nate comes under the head of impossible, so Judy and me adjourns till the next meeting. As we're passing the parlor Rags is still in there with Mrs. Willcox and she burns me up by calling Judy in.

I went on up to my room and I get in bed, but I can't get to sleep while Rags is down there talking to Judy, even if her mother was among those present. In about ten minutes I hear Judy come tripping up the stairs. Passing my door, her little feet hesitates and she calls softly. "Good night, Gale!" I manage to trim: "Good night, you sweet little angel!" down to "Good night, Judy!" and then she whispers: "I wouldn't stay downstairs after *you* came up, Gale. I left Rags down there with mother. He'll make her sleepy, and that's much better for her than veronal!"

At that I turned over and slept like a log.

Well, before I get through with life, maybe I'll have a evening more exciting than the time I went up to Irontown, Pa., for the praise-worthy purpose of fight-

ing Mr. Shifty McTague. I say *maybe* I will—but I doubt it. Them man-eating ironworkers which craved bloodshed and violence seen enough of both of 'em to do 'em till the next draft! Likewise, Nate got his mind all cleared of a subject which had been bothering him for a long time. None of the four boys I stopped in my adventures as a welterweight give me much trouble, and Nate hankered to know could I fight after being knocked a couple of times, pounded to a jelly, and with the mob yelling for my execution. All these and more questions was answered that evening in dear old Irontown.

It was a night of surprises, so let's start with the first. While my handlers is getting me ready in the dressing room, Nate goes out in the arena to examine the ring and see what's doing generally. When he comes back he looks thoughtful indeed. He tells me that the charming ironworkers is so positive that Shifty McTague will slap me for a goal that they've made Shifty a three to one favorite in the betting. Some of 'em are laying seven to five I don't last four rounds.

"I don't like the look of things, kid," says Nate. "Most of them engine makers has been hittin' up the hooch, and they're due to drop a slew of jack when you flatten this boloney. They seem to think his name is Dempsey instead of McTague and your name is Mud instead of Smith! The referee's O. K.—Jack Dougherty, I know him, but them ironworkers is—listen, don't play around with this McTague at all. Go out there and take him as quick as possible, and the faster we get out of this burg after you bounce him,

the more chances we got of livin' to a ripe old age, get me?"

Well, that fails to steady my nerves to any great extent, but I'm outwardly cool when we go down the aisle to the ring. The place is packed to the chandeliers, and, just like Kayo Kelly said, the customers pays plenty of loud attention to the blue silk bathrobe Judy give me. However, I was getting used to the crowd's more or less good-natured razzing, and while I can't say it done me any good, it didn't make me want to run back and lock myself in the dressing room for a good cry either! Shifty McTague is already in the ring, and I walk over and politely shake hands with him, while Nate looks over his bandages. McTague is one of them tall, lanky birds, looking more like a boxer than a hitter. He gets a reception from the mob, most of which had their dough on him, which would of satisfied a actor. I draw a storm of hoots, with a few scattered handclaps. To this day I think the handclaps was from my seconds, Shiney Jepps and Kayo Kelly.

Around the ring is a circle of boxes, all full of dignified-looking gents in dress suits—officials of the locomotive works, Nate finds out. The rest of the mob is so excited before the bell that half of 'em can't even sit down. Nate instructs me to go after Shifty McTague's mid-section exclusively in the first round, as Shifty don't look to him like he could take it. Then—the gong!

I come out and go to touch gloves with Shifty, and he sneers at my extended hands, jabbing my head back

with his left. The ironworkers yells with joy, the referee warns Shifty, and, as I clinch with him, I hear hisses for him from the ringside boxes. The referee breaks us, and Shifty tries to nail me with his right on the break-away, but he's out of luck. I slid away from the punch and buried my own right glove to the wrist just above the belt. You should of heard him grunt! His face shows me he don't like it, and he tried to dive into a clinch, but, having found out all I wanted to know about him, I'm anxious to wind matters up and get back to Drew City. I pushed him off and smashed a left and right to the body.

The crowd roars as Shifty drops to one knee. He takes "nine," and when he gets up I spill him again with a torrid right hook to the heart. The ironworkers has all became lunatics, and they are giving Shifty enough advice to last him the rest of his life! Shifty stumbles to his feet again, barely beating the count, and this time he's through for the evening. I chase him all over the ring, but it takes two to make a quarrel, and Shifty has become a pacifist of the worst kind. The frenzied ironworkers is bitterly imploring their boy friend to fight, but nothing stirring!

A minute before the bell the perspiring referee manages to pry Shifty away from me, and I promptly slam him in the wind with my left, sending him back on his heels. I tossed a wicked right at the jaw and missed by a foot, but, never the less, Shifty dives head first to the canvas! His admirers is dumfounded and so am I, for that matter. . I expected the fight of my life, and Shifty McTague turns out to be not only a set-up, but

a quitter to boot. No fun in that! The disgusted referee bends over Shifty, who's laying comfortably on his back blinking up at the lights. As the referee reaches "ten," Shifty's seconds swarm into the ring yelling "Foul," but the sneering referee shoves 'em away and holds up my glove to the petrified crowd.

Then the fun began!

Them ironworkers has bet nearly every nickel on Shifty McTague. For weeks they'd looked forward to a battle they'd never forget, and here he goes to work and quits in the first round. Half of 'em is full of hooch, and, boy, you should of heard 'em! For weeks afterward I'd wake up in the middle of the night hearing that crazy mob yelling like wolves. While Nate's wrapping my bathrobe around me and stealing nervous glances at the maniacs, I think of that bet Spence made with Rags—must be a clean knockout or the bet's off, and I never knocked out Shifty McTague any more than I discovered radium. The mob's booing me to a fare-thee-well, as if it's *my* fault Shifty McTague is no game-cock! Then the matchmaker climbs into the ring—half the attendance is in it already—and shoves his way over to us.

"Do you guys expect to get paid off for this hippodrome?" he snarls at Nate. "Why, them babies out there will *lynch* you and your boy in a couple of minutes, and then they'll come back and lynch *me* for makin' this match! Listen to 'em—look at 'em—try to get out of here; 'at's all!"

"Ain't they no coppers in this slab?" asks Nate.

Him and the matchmaker's so scared they make me laugh, on the level!

"Listen!" I butt in—and they listen—"I don't know as I blame the crowd. I only boxed two minutes, and I ain't even warmed up. Tell you what I'll do—I'll step the other nine rounds with any boy of my weight you can dig up! Now——"

But with a yelp of joy the matchmaker is hollering for the timekeeper to ring the bell for silence. He gets something like quiet, and when the crowd hears the announcement they go wild with delight and scurry back to their seats. The "Entertainment Committee" of the ironworkers' festival gets busy, and while Nate's still telling me I'm cuckoo and wringing his hands, a guy in a bathrobe is boosted into the ring from the other side. Sweet Grandpa, he's a light-heavyweight, or else I'm a Spanish mackeral!

Nate rushes around wildly, waving his arms and yelling murder, but the "Entertainment Committee" pushes him aside. The referee takes time to bend down and whisper in my ear that he'll stop it if it looks like murder, and the ironworkers can cry their eyes out for all he cares. The elephant in the other corner is introduced as "Battling Lee of Harrisburg," and he gets a rousing reception.

Battling Lee refuses to weigh in for Nate, so the bout is announced as "catchweights." I ain't trying to alibi myself. I don't need no alibi, but Battling Lee's got fifteen pounds on me if he's got a ounce. He starts out to win in a round, and he come near doing it too! Having it on me in height, weight, and reach, he gets

down to business with the bell. Under Nate's instructions to keep moving all the time, so's this big stiff can't set for a punch, I step around him, using a left jab which he avoids with ease, his long reach helping him to beat me to the punch every time.

In half a minute my nose and lips is bleeding, which brings three thousand cheers from the mob, and then, obeying Nate's frantic howls, I drop long-range tactics and get in close. I know my only chance is to keep boring in and wear him down, he's far too big for me to goal with one punch. Some stiff short-arm jolts to the mid-section sells Battling Lee the idea of keeping me away, and a sudden left swing to the ribs crashes me against the ropes.

I bounce off 'em into a straight right which cuts my ear. The mob jumps on the seats bawling for a knock-out, and I commencce to feel dizzy and look wildly at Nate for instructions. He hollers at me to clinch, but Battling Lee measures me with a left jab and then hooks his right to my stomach. This one come near being the business, but the bell stopped hostilities with us clinched in my corner.

I am a very tired boy when I flop on the stool. Nate shoves a orange into my mouth for me to suck and jams the old ammonia under my nose. My left ear is bleeding badly, but caustic stopped that, the stuff biting into me till the water runs out of my eyes. Nate tells me to keep my mouth closed or a uppercut will tear my tongue off, and to stay as close to this guy as I can.

I nod and run right out into a clinch with the bell.

This ain't what the ironworkers wants, and they howl for me to stand off and fight, while the bunch in the ringside boxes screams for me to hold on. Battling Lee wrenches away from me and lands solidly with a right to the head. I miss a left and right to the jaw, but connect with a right hook to the heart that stings Lee and makes him back water.

There's where I make a fatal mistake! Half goofy as I am, I think Lee's gone. I rush in wide open to send over the finisher, and that's what Lee's waiting for. He ducks my right and crashes a overhand left to my jaw. I went down like he shot me through the heart, and I suffer from that one punch till long after the fight's over. Honest, I'm in a trance from then on! I crawled to my feet in time to beat a count I can't even hear, cover up, and take a pasting I'll remember to my dying day. That round is two years long! Lee's too excited at the prospects of a knockout to time his blows, or I'd never of weathered the storm. As it is, I am floored three times in that horrible second round, and I'm on my shoulder blades at the bell.

The next four rounds is no fight, but a nightmare! I don't think I hit Battling Lee five solid punches, but he hit me with everything but the time-keeper's watch. The house is in one continual uproar, with the ironworkers imploring Lee to murder me, and be done with it, and the guys in the boxes howling for the referee to stop the assassination. Lee is battling me from pillar to post with cutting, slashing punches that rip me to ribbons. I must of been a sight for a dispensary along about the fifth round.

Every time I stagger to my corner at the gong a flood of water from Nate's bucket meets me halfways, and once I see water on Nate too, running down his cheeks from his eyes. But I see all this like a fellow in a dream, and I remember the din from the other side of the ropes bothers me worse than Lee's wallops now.

This Lee is raw too, don't think he ain't. He's so mad because he can't knock me stiff that he does everything but bite me! He butts, lays on me with that extry fifteen pounds, and rabbit punches me in the clinches, that chopping blow with the side of his glove on the back of my neck, just about paralyzing me for a minute afterwards. All I do is cover up, clinch, sock over a right when I think I see a opening, then—take it!

When I come to my corner in the third round Nate says I am weeping, and during the rest between the fourth and fifth he says I sit there and laugh in a high voice till he thinks I have went cuckoo, and he's scared silly. He keeps asking me should he throw in the sponge. I says if he throws in the sponge, he better be in Egypt when I come out of the ring!

Early in the seventh round I commence to notice that Battling Lee's tiring fast. He's been doing all the walloping and he's about punched himself out trying to stop me. Although I'm pretty well shopworn, I guess I ain't as tired as he is, because I've only been catching, while he's been pitching. About the middle of this round Lee cut my right eye with a straight left, and this is one of the times I think I see a opening for

my right. I hook him under the chin and his head goes back like it's on a hinge.

They jump up in the ringside boxes and howl themselves hoarse for me to follow up my advantage. I don't need their advice. I'm on top of Lee like a wildcat! I waste a dozen haymakers before my head steadies and I take aim. Then a right swing sends Lee to his knees and the mob groans. Lee waits for "eight" and gets up with a silly grin on his face, like he's thinking "How did *that* happen?" I show him how it happened right away by dumping him on his face with a left and right to the jaw.

This time a dead silence seems to fall over the arena, broke only by the cheers of my swell rooters in the boxes. Lee looks dead to the world, laying on the floor, and them ironworkers has bet on him in a effort to get back the jack they drop on Shifty McTague. As the referee reaches "nine" without a flicker of a muscle from Mr. Lee, the timekeeper rings the bell, cutting the round short by twelve seconds and robbing me of a clean knockout!

I skip to my corner looking like the battle field after the first day of the Marne. But appearances is deceiving. I feel like a million dollars! The only thing bothers me is my right eye, which is closed as tight as a drum. During the rest Battling Lee's handlers surround the referee and they seems to be quite a argument going on. Lee is sprawled back in his stool, his head rolling around like his necks broke. Then the referee comes over to our corner and asks Nate if he'll accept a draw.

He says Battling Lee's in bad shape and the ironworkers will surely mob us if I knock him cold in the next round and they go broke on the fight. A lot of swell sportsmen, hey? The referee's advice is to take a draw and beat it. Nate looks out at the ugly crowd and tells me he thinks the referee's right. Besides, he adds, I can see out of only one eye now, and if by any chance Lee comes around during the rest, he'll probably knock *me* kicking in the next frame.

I just let Nate go on talking without paying the slightest of attention. I'm thinking of that mole on Battling Lee's chin which I'm going to sight at for the knockout in the next round. I'll bring his guard down with a left to the stomach and then I'll crash him with a right hook to the chin! That's what I keep saying to myself over and over . . . left to the body and right to the chin, left to the body and right to the chin. Even humming it to the air of "Casey Jones." When Nate stops for breath I says all his conversation to me is that much apple sauce. Then I says they must be *some* way he can get my right eye open. Nate grabs my head and turns it around so's I can see the threatening mob. He says he's been in these kind of jams at mining camps, and he's positive we'll never leave town alive if I knock Battling Lee for a row of silos.

I says let's stop Lee first and then we'll take on the ironworkers. This Lee has played put and take with me for seven rounds and he's fouled me at least a half dozen times. O. K. Now it's *my* turn. Am I going to let a mob of bum sports do me out of my fun? Let 'em try to stop me! Anyways, they ain't no such thing

as a "draw" in boxing, no matter what *anybody* says. One guy always has a shade on the other. I didn't want no draws. I wanted to either knock 'em dead or get knocked and be done with it!

Knockout Kelly butts in and tells Nate I'm right and to leave me win my fight. He points to a scar under his own eye and says that once when his eye was closed in a battle Nate made a little cut under it which let out the clogged blood, and he was able to force the lid open with his glove and keep stepping. I turn around to Nate.

"Get out your penknife, Nate, and let's go!" I says.

I hear wild cheers right under my stool. It's the dress-suited guys in the ringside boxes which has been taking all this in. Nate moans, but he opens his penknife and makes a slit under my right eye where it's swollen. Then him and Kayo squeezes it. It don't hurt—much. The referee waves Lee's seconds out of the ring and the bell clangs. I got up slowly, holding my right eye open with my gloves till I get a fair view of Lee. I'm still humming: "A left to the body and a right to the chin!" Lee's handlers yells for him to go after my bum eye, and he lets a panic-stricken left go which bounces off my hunched shoulder. Then I set myself and drove my left into his ribs. Down comes Lee's guard and sock goes my right on that mole, just about the point of his chin. His knees buckle under him and the great big stiff slides under the lower rope to the floor, as cold as a shark's eye!

My friends in the boxes acts like raving maniacs, and silk hats and canes gets hurled in the air. But my

little pals, the ironworkers, rushes the ring, howling murder! As they reach the ringside boxes, they see who's who—their bosses—and the leaders faulter in their stride. One old guy gets up and begins bawling 'em out plenty. What he's saying I don't know, except some of it is that if they don't beat it they'll find their jobs at the locomotive factory is a thing of the past. The next clear memory I got of anything I'm on the train for Drew City.

About half ways back some men comes through our car and they seem a bit familiar. When they stop at the seat me and Nate's occupying, it dawns on me that these is the babies which was in the ringside boxes at the fight. One of 'em, a dignified, gray-haired gent, bends over and pats my shoulder, saying he's one of the big noises at the locomotive plant and he wants to apologize for the way his hired men acted. Then he shakes my hand and says I am a boy which will go a long ways, because I've got a fighting heart. The rest of the gents nods pleasantly to me and they all pass on.

Well, Spence is at the station when we get to Drew City and he's pumping my hand off when somebody calls his name.

"Hello—my father's here, Gale!" says Spence, kind of excited. "He wasn't due until to-morrow—say, you're going to meet dad right now!"

Meet dad with my face looking like a war map! I pulled away, but dad's in front of me.

"Dad," says Spence, "this is Gale Galen, who I told you about. He's just won a bout at——"

"At Irontown!" butts in dad, laughing at the ex-

pression which must of been on my face. He's no less than the man which pat me on the shoulder on the train! "Young man," he says to me, "some time I wish you would autograph the—er—my dress shirt. The front of it is spattered with the fighting blood of a he-man, and I'll get a thrill every time I look at it!"

ROUND FIVE

"DIEU ET MON DROIT!"

WHAT Nate and Kayo Kelly never could understand is that this studying I wear tearing off at nights when I wasn't doing my stuff in a ring was conditioning me for a bigger battle than any I ever had at a fight club—a battle to boost myself out of the ash heap I was born to and make myself *mean* something! Say, if I ever get elected President, not that nobody has nominated me or nothing like that, but if I ever do, why, my first presidential act will be to draw up a law making ignorance a crime. D'ye think I'll punish the ignorant guys themselves for it? No, sir! I'll send the rich babies to jail which allows ignorance to be committed in their neighborhoods for want of the money to prevent it. The money which would feed and clothe the kids while they're going to school and getting a chance to use their little heads for something else besides hatracks. Then they won't be no more eight-year-old kids with forty-eight-year-old faces selling papers, working in coal mines, in cotton mills and canneries, when they ought to be in school!

Don't get the idea that while I was giving my brains these workouts I neglected my boxing tuition. Nate always followed me around with sarcastic remarks,

advice, bawling outs, and the etc., which on top of all the physical culture I was getting every day used to steam me up. But I got to like it and look forward to my daily chores in the gym with a relish, because I knew it all meant something and it was all speeding me along to the top. The way I looked at it, as long as I was in the ring at all I might as well be a champ. I'd rather be a first-class laborer than a third-class king, no fooling. Say—even when I was a newsboy, I sold a mean paper and don't think I didn't!

Well, having got all that off my manly chest, I will now get down to the business of the meeting, which is my fight with the middleweight champion, in which I knock him so cold his name could of been Battling Zero instead of Frankie Jackson, which it was. Although I knock Frankie stiff, I only get a draw on the account of a technicality. The technicality was that I am likewise knocked stiff myself. Laugh *that* off!

Within a year after Nate has talked me into laying aside my white coat and apron for a pair of boxing gloves, I have fought my way to the right for a scuffle with the middleweight champion. But it takes two to make a quarrel and the champ don't wish to box me no more than he wishes he had pneumonia. He just simply won't romp with me and that's all they is to it. Instead of that, he plays around with the set-ups, knocking over kids which don't know a left hook from the referee's tonsils and collecting anywheres from ten to twenty-five thousand bucks for each of these aggravated assaults.

Nate's worried a lot about the champ refusing to do business with us, because honest I was growing like New York. I'm having a terrible time keeping down to the middleweight limit and Nate's crazy to have me fight the champion while I can still make the weight for him, because he knows I'll win the title as sure as salmon comes under the head of fish. But the champ turns a deaf ear to all our pitiful pleadings to come and get his pasting and be done with it. Even when the newspapers puts him on the pan and Nate says he can have all the money and we'll just take our expenses, why, the safe-playing, money-grabbing middleweight king just laughs at us and then jumps out to some slab like Gazunk, Ia., and flattens some sap which couldn't win a fight if he had the only ticket on one in a raffle.

"If I can't toss you in a ring with this hothouse champeen in a couple of months, you won't be able to make 158 any more than I can make a clock!" moans Nate to me one day. "Here I baby you along, rate your fights till you've flattened everything but the Catskill Mountains and now when you're a cinch for a title this big boloney won't mingle with us!" He walks up and down the room, wringing his hands.

"I'll pick a fight with him on the street, hey?" I says, hoping to cheer him up.

"You do and I'll help him clout you!" hollers Nate. "How many times do I have to tell you never fight *nobody* for nothin'? Never raise your hands unless they's pennies in it for both of us—don't ever forget 'at part of it. I'm goin' to take you around to every fight club where 'at synthetic champ starts and we'll chal-

lenge him from the ring till every time he hears your name he'll get convulsions!"

So we did. But the champ does not get convulsions. Every time he fought around New York I get introduced from the ring and publicly challenge him to fight me. Once I got a idea, and after the announcer has bellered my challenge I whisper in his ear to add: "This is the eighteenth consecutive time 'Six-Second' Smith has challenged Frankie Jackson for a championship bout. He will continue challenging till the champion is shamed into fighting him!" The announcer grins and repeats that after me and half the crowd laughs while the other half cheers. Does that bother the champ? Why, the big stiff just looks up from his corner where he's waiting to go on with some dub, gives me a good-natured grin and says: "You tell 'em, kid; I bet you're the snake's hips, no foolin'!"

I would of smacked him then and there, only Nate grabs me and hustles me out of the ring to the tune of mingled laughs and cheers. When we get down to our seats, Nate turns to me kind of mad-sarcastic.

"Listen," he says. "I've tried everything *I* know to get this gil to fight us and no can do! Now you claim you ain't always goin' to be a scrapper—you state you got too much brains to be a pug. You're always studyin' and clownin' with 'em books and the like when you ain't workin'. O. K.—less see if it *means* anything! Less see if your eighty-six carat brain can dope a way to get this champ in a ring with us. If you can't, I'm goin' to throw all them books of yours in the ash can. Now go on, do your stuff!" But

my mind is already at work on this problem and I don't even condescend to answer.

Well, if Edison had done the thinking I do that night and half the next day, Heavens knows what *he* would of invent, but what *I* invent is a way to get the middleweight champ into a ring with me—object, fisteycuffs! The minute this clever idea hits me I go looking for Judy to get *her* opinions of my scheme, but she's in the place where she always seems to be those days when I want her and that's elsewhere. Anyways, I go down in the kitchen and there's Knockout Kelly with one of Mrs. Willcox's aprons on, peeling a wicked potato. Kayo is one of the toughest welters which ever clipped a chump on the chin, but around the house he's as mild as any June you ever seen. He's stopped One-Round Michaels in New York two nights previous, but before Michaels went to dreamland he closed Kayo's right eye for auld lang sang. So Kayo is having no little trouble undressing potatoes with only one eye taking any interest in the matter. Nate is mixing a batter under the direction of Mrs. Willcox, and when he sees me he waves the mixer at me.

"Get out of our kitchen," he says. "Get out of our kitchen, or else grab a towel and get busy on them supper dishes! What d'ye think y'are, a guest here?"

I meekly grabbed a towel and commence giving Mrs. Willcox's china set a good rub down and while I'm doing this I tell Nate the scheme I have doped out to force the middleweight champ to give me a crack at his title. Nate is keeping on mixing this batter while

I'm telling him, and by the time I get through he's so excited that he's mixed the batter all over the table, all over his clothes, and all over the floor, and what Mrs. Willcox says to him was plenty. I will tell you my scheme like I told Nate and I only hope you ain't mixing no batter while you're reading this.

Well, my scheme was just this—*I aim to show up as a handler in the corner of every boy the champ fights from then on!* How's that for a piece of figuring? The way I look at it, after this guy sees me across the ring watching him and seconding the fellow he's fighting about a dozen times, why, I will begin to get on his nerves. He'll get to thinking about me being there and he'll come to look for me and the first thing you know he'll be willing to do anything to get rid of me. He'll be so crazy mad at me that he'll crave me in a ring so's he can ruin me. Then I'll get a bout with him and that's all I want!

Nate says this scheme is the lion's mane and I have missed my calling. I should of been a Pullman conductor, says Nate, which thinks a Pullman conductor has got a better job than President G. Harding.

Without waiting to hear what *you* think of the scheme, I will tell you that it worked to perfection. I showed up as a second in the other boy's corner just seven times when the champ had enough. At first he seemed to get quite a giggle out of it and he used to work his man close to the ropes where I'm sitting with the water bucket and sponge and he'd call down all kinds of nasty cracks at me. Like, for the example, he'd say: "Here's what *you'll* get, Stupid!" and with

that he'd bounce his unlucky adversus almost at my feet. I never made a comeback. I'd just sit there staring up at him until after a while he got in the habit of looking over his shoulder at me to see if I'm there. He just couldn't help himself. When he got pasted on the chin a few times on the account of that bad habit of looking for me, why, he give in.

One fight he had, with my handling the boy he's boxing, I'll never forget. Here's a kid taking a terrible pasting from a fellow I know I can trim the same way I know this is America, or even more so than that. A little aggressiveness would of turned the tide of battle for my man, but the fact that he's fighting a champion licks him. Every time he comes to his corner, I'd tell this boy—Young Hunter, his name was—I'd tell him: "This guy is a mark for a right uppercut, at least *try* one!" And this sap would shake his head and pant: "Try nothin', I couldn't hit this baby with a medicine ball! He *must* be good—he's the champ, ain't he? I only hope I can stay the limit, 'at's all!"

That's the stuff that losers is made of, in boxing and everything else, too. Why, if I ever tried in my life, I'd try against the champ—the champ of *anything!* Suppose you do lose? Why, all you lose is the fight itself, ain't it? You win with *yourself,* because you know you tried your darndest and something inside of you says: "Atta boy!" It's *got* to!

Well, we finally sign with the middleweight champ, with no more dickering over the articles than they was at the Peace Conference. About all Frankie Jackson didn't insist on me doing was that I should check

my right arm at the box office the night of the fight. I have got to make 158 ringside, while he can come in at catchweights. The muss is to be twelve rounds at Jersey City where no referee's decision is allowed, so the only way I can win the title is to knock Frankie stiff. By a odd coincidence, this happens to be my intentions so I don't moan over that part of it. The champ is to get $25,000, win, lose or draw, while my wages is to be $3,500, and how Nate ever pried that out of them hard-boiled promoters is a mystery to me to this day!

I train for this scuffle at Drew City, where I trained for all my brawls and nearly everybody in the town drops in every day to see us work out. From three to five in the afternoon, when Nate lets 'em in for fifteen cents a head, the place was just packed.

But there's one guy which didn't show up at the training camp no more and that's Rags Dempster. This dizzy dumbell was too busy hanging around Judy or calling her up on the phone. I couldn't dope out how he really stood with her—one minute she'd curl her lip at him, the next minute he seems to be sitting pretty with her. I try hard to keep out of his way, for this bird affected me like a red shirt affects a bull. I don't hunt trouble, because when I get steamed up I can't laugh matters off, something has got to fall—the other fellow, or in the contrary!

Amongst the assorted customers which came into the gym to watch us do our stuff was Lem Garfield. At that time Lem was still what Spence Brock called a "miss and thrope." I pass that one. All I know is

that Lem had a grouch against the whole human race and he didn't care who won it! By studying law at night he had advanced from the Elite Haberdashery to doing this and that in the law office of O'Leary & Kaplan and he predicted a great future for himself. One thing was certain and that was that Lem couldn't miss being a large help to O'Leary & Kaplan on the account of Judge Tuckerman thinking the world and all of him. The judge gave Lem priveleges in his courtroom which would startle Europe and used to burn the other lawyers up.

Lem was so proud of being even a half-fledged lawyer that he asks me to go over to Judge Tuckerman's court one day with him and listen while he handles a couple of cases. Well as this particular court of law has got a vaudeyville show looking like a dignified funeral, I went with the greatest of pleasure. Out of a clear sky on the ways over to the court, Lem commences to wildy pan what he calls "the interests" and "soulless corporations." I don't know what it's all about, till in a couple of minutes it come out that when the Elite Haberdashery give Lem the gate he tried to plaster himself on the payroll of a soulless corporation, but after one attempt he claimed a foul and quit.

"You give up too easy, Lem," I says. "Lots of fellows has begun with big corporations as office boys and the like and worked themselves up to rich millionaires by simply——"

But that's all the encouragement the learned counsel wants and stopping dead in the middle of the street,

Lem squares off and addresses me like I'm the Supreme Court.

"Years ago mebbe a ambitious young feller could start with a big corporation and work his way up," he begins, in a kind of loud voice, "But, gentlemen of the—eh—but, Gale, he kinnot do it now! If he's got any gumption at all, his ambition's killed when he applies for work. Have you ever saw the application blank a feller applyin' for the portfolio of, say, office clerk, has got to fill out for some of them big corporations? Well if you're the kind of a feller which wants to answer in detail questions so private that they'd make you smack down your best friend if he asked 'em, if you're *that* kind of a feller, I say to you this afternoon, why go ahead! If bein' asked to fill in rough sketches of your mother, your father, the *status quo* of your habits, conduct, religion and politics, any sicknesses you're addicted to, what debts you owe and why—if you're the kind of a feller which will supply all that personal information in return for a fifteen-dollar a week job, why do so. But not Lem Garfield—I think too much of my independence!"

He almost bellers the last part of it, slapping himself heartily on the chest, and as it is a hobby of mine never to attract no undue attention on the street, why I tried to quiet him down. Before I can say two and a half words though, Lem's got his second wind.

"It ain't the Big Boss which is responsible for that kind of a application blank," he goes on. "A application blank which loses them big, preedatory corporations plenty of good material every day in the shape of

bright, but proud young fellers like me! As the matter and fact, I bet the average president of a big firm would throw them blanks out of his office if he ever seen one. No sir, the feller which gets that application blank up is the same pinhead which has another blank printed which visitors to the office is supposed to fill out. A blank which has sent thousands of dollars away from many a firm—sent away, ragin' mad, manys the man with a big proposition. I got one of them blanks with me—look here!"

With that he pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a silk hat. Here's what it says on the paper:

Mr.....
Desires to see Mr.....
Regarding.....

"Now tell me," howls Lem, "now tell me, if *you* come in a man's office with a big deal to swing his way or a personal matter to talk over, would you fill out that insultin' fule paper for the office boy to peruse?"

I don't get no chance to answer because we're arriving in the courtroom, but I must say this—a few weeks after that I went into Lem's office to talk over a investment with him and before I can see him I got to fill out a blank practically exactly like the one he showed me that day. I guess a man's ideas on lots of things changes with his position in life, hey?

Well, Judge Tuckerman is just coming into court when we get there and the first thing he does is ex-

change snappy nods with old Ajariah Stubbs which always had a box, you might say, at the judge's hearings. Judge Tuckerman and Ajariah was once the champion quoit pitching team of Sussex County, but rheumatism turned 'em into checker players. The first case before the judge that day is a sport from New York charged with speeding and reckless driving on the State Road through Drew City. Judge Tuckerman asks him what he's got to say about it and make it snappy and the minute the prisoner opens his mouth to speak, why, the judge pronounces him guilty. The victim hollers for a trial by jury, but the judge waves him away. He says you never can tell what a chicken-hearted jury will do, but he knows darn well what *he's* going to do and he fines this fellow a hundred dollars even. This wakes the prisoner up and he demands to know how Judge Tuckerman figures a fine as heavy as that for a first offense.

"Twenty dollars for speedin'," says the judge, glaring at his prey over his cheaters, "thutty for reckless drivin', forty for argyin' with the court and ten which I saved ye by not lettin' ye have a trial by jury, in which case ye would of had to hire a lawyer!" He bangs the desk with his gavel, "Ah—ptu!" he says, "bring on the next scoundrel!"

The next case panics me and causes Judge Tuckerman to bar me from the courtroom for laughing out loud. This was Ollie Yerks, which wants to sue the Palace Eating House for assault and battery and a week's salary as cook. Ollie claims he got fired without no notice and for no reason at all. Judge Tuckerman

calls on Ollie's ex-boss, Red Fisher, to testify.

"Well, Jedge, your honor, sir," says Red. "It's this way, I'm what you call a nervous man—all aquiver, is what I mean, Jedge. Well, Ollie here gits himself a pair of shoes which squeaks somethin' scandalous when he walks around my kitchen. Every time he takes a step them squeakin' shoes goes through me like a knife—me bein' that nervous, like I told you, Jedge. So I says, 'Ollie' I says, 'Ollie, you got to git you some other shoes. Them squeakin' shoes is drivin' me crazy!' Jedge, he jest laffs. Well, next day he's still got on them same shoes and there he is walkin' around my kitchen, squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak! Jedge, I git to tremblin' and quiverin' somethin' terrible. So I goes out and I says, 'Ollie, either you or them shoes has got to go. I can't stand that squeakin' and that's all they is to it!' This time, Jedge, your honor, he gives me a ugly look. Well, Jedge, yistiddy, he comes in wearin' a pair of canvas sneakers. He walks back to the kitchen without makin' a sound. I'm jest goin' to thank him, when what does he do but sit down and take off them sneakers and put back on them squeaky shoes again! Jedge, like I told you, I'm nervous. I listen to that squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak for about five minutes and I'm jumpin' and shakin' like a maniac. So I run back to the kitchen and smacked Ollie down and throwed him out of my place! That's all, Jedge, your honor."

"You want your job back, Ollie?" says Judge Tuckerman.

"Yes sir, I do!" says Ollie.

"All right. You go back and hereafter you come to work barefooted!" says the judge. He bangs with his gavel, "Ah, ptu—next case!"

That's more than I can take! I get a bit hysterical and the judge has me put out. So I don't get to see Lem lawyering after all.

Well, about a week before I fight the middleweight champ, Spence Brock asks me up to his house one night. He says his father wants to see me and if he had said the King of Brazil wanted to see me, I couldn't of been more surprised! John T. Brock is president of the Irontown Locomotive Works and you know what a locomotive costs. Why, even if he only sells one locomotive a week, Spence's dad must have a bank roll which would make a millionaire grind his teeth with envy. They live part of the time in a sheik's palace on the lake in Drew City and they got servants and autos and motor boats to the extent of galore.

Anyways, I can't imagine what Mr. Brock can want to see me for. On the ways up to the house with Spence, who's wishing out loud that I was going to Newport with him, I can't stand the strain no longer so I ask him what he thinks is the reason for his father sending for me. Spence laughs.

"I don't think, I *know!*" he says. "If father has a weakness, it's boxing. He never misses a big fight, no matter where it's held. Well, then, think of the treat for him to talk to one of the principals in a world's championship battle, almost on the eve of the bout. Why, he'll have the time of his life tonight.

Honestly, Gale, he'll be more pleased than if you were the biggest man in Wall Street, bless his old heart!"

Well, we finally get to the house and the butler lets us in, taking my cap and the classy belted raincoat. I was featuring then, like I'm the Duke of Diphtheria or the equivalent. I got on my best blue serge suit with a crease in it you could slice ham with, patent-leather pumps, black silk socks, a white silk shirt, and a expensive two-dollar blue silk tie. I got a wow of a diamond scarf pin in it, and altogether I check up pretty snappy, what I mean. Yet in this palace where you sink to your ankles walking across the rugs, with curving chairs and oil paintings and flashing mirrors greeting you at every turn, why, I feel in the whispering stage, like once when I visit the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Brock is sitting out on the glass-covered pazzaza at a little table and he certainly does look grand—just like one of them wealthy bankers does in the movies. He's a great, big, good-looking, powerfully built man, a man which could no doubt been a good heavyweight when he was younger. They's just a bit of gray at his temples and sitting there in his Tuxedo he sure checks up perfect, for a fact! Well, I'm a little bit scared to be standing there before all these dollars and don't think I ain't, but Mr. Brock gets up and shakes my hand and actually thanks me for coming over, can you imagine that? Then we all sit down and after we get the state of the weather and this kind of thing all settled, why, I soon put him at his ease with me.

Mr. Brock tells me I look fit to lick my weight in

wildcats and he likewise says that him and a party of friends will have a ringside box at my fight with Frankie Jackson. He tells me he's saw the middleweight champion start a few times and he thinks I'll be too young and strong for him. I says I hope so. Then Mr. Brock wants to know have *I* ever saw the champ fight and I told him how I had hounded him into a match with me by appearing as a second in the corners of the guys he fought. This seems to give Mr. Brock quite a kick. He slaps the table and laughs his head off and his voice is as deep as the Pacific.

"By thunder!" he says. "That sort of thinking is worthy of a better cause, my boy! What do you do when you're not fighting or training—how do you spend your time?"

"Studying," I says. Spence moves his chair closer and keeps looking from his father to me. Spence thinks I'm the elephant's instep and I can see how anxious he is for me to make a hit with his dad.

"Studying?" says Mr. Brock, sitting up. He's got a habit of putting a cigar in and out of his mouth, but he never seems to light it. "Studying what?"

"Everything, sir," I says. "People, books, things that happen to me. I—I—well, I'm only going to be a prize fighter for temporarily. After that, I—" I kind of trailed off, thinking what in the Alabama does Mr. Brock care about my plans? But he seems to.

"Yes—after that, what?" he asks me. I see from his face that he ain't kidding, so I went on.

"After that, I mean after I have made enough money at this game so's I can knock off for a while and look

around, why, I'm going to pick out something better and make good at it!" I says. "My first idea was to box myself into a college education, but I guess I'll be too old to start there by the time I have the bank roll. I'll have to pick up knowledge from here and there."

"Well, son," says Mr. Brock, kind of thoughtful, and he flicks the end of his cigar like he's knocking off the ash, though it ain't even lit. "Well, son, *I* never went to college either. I—er—picked up knowledge from here and there, as you put it, myself. I'm going to send my boy to Princeton, of course, but I'm not sure in my own mind which of you is going to the better school! Adversity has given the world most of its greatest men, just as affluence has killed ambition in many who might have been great. In fact, I rather believe that had *I* been the son of wealthy parents, *my* boy would now be the son of poor ones! Well, this conversation is growing rather heavy, isn't it?"

He breaks off suddenly with a smile, throws away his cigar and picking up another one he bites the end off and sticks it in his mouth, but still he don't light it. Before I went home I bet he done that a dozen times without smoking once. Even these well-to-do millionaires has their little odd tricks, hey? Anyhow, Mr. Brock then swings the talk around to boxing. Gee, about the only big fight he's missed was the Battle of Bunker Hill! He remembers exactly how many rounds all the big championship battles went and even what punch won 'em.

His favorite scrapper was Bob Fitzsimmons, and he tells us a dozen tales about Fitz's fights, seeming to

enjoy 'em as much as we do and me and Spence just sits there open-mouthed like kids hearing bedtime stories. But every now and then, why, Mr. Brock would switch the conversation to me and my chances of getting somewheres, so that without hardly knowing it I have told him my complete life's history from the time I left the nursery to the time I entered his house.

He acts awful interested and he asks me lots of questions. I told him I thought I had a bent for salesmanship and he tells me to go to it, because salesmanship's as big a game as any in the world. He advises me to take a correspondent's course on business from some good mail-order school and likewise to try my hand at selling things—*anything good*—whenever I get the chance.

Just before I'm going home Mr. Brock says that he's awful glad to of had this talk with me, but gladder still that Spence had showed the good sense to pick me as a friend. From now on, he says, he'll have his eye on me, and he wants to talk to me again. If I ever want anything, let him know.

I walk back to Mrs. Willcox's boarding house on air, and that's a fact. Imagine me spending the evening with a full-fledged millionaire! And this Mr. Brock is a prince too, even, if he has got a million. He couldn't of been nicer to me if I had of been up there to buy one of his locomotives—in fact, he done everything but give me one for a present! Spence is tickled silly at the way the visit worked out. He was crazy to have me make good with his father, and to

have his father make good with me, and apparently that's what we done.

Well, I picked out a correspondent's school and wrote for their course in salesmanship, and Judy helped me study it at nights. It was awful interesting too. It gave sample sales talks to hurl at the victim you are seeking to sell something to, and I tried out a lot of 'em on Judy, for what I was trying to sell *her* was myself! I also practice these sales arguments in the privacies of my room when I'm alone, and one day Nate walks in and hears me almost in a frenzy trying to sell myself a order. When Nate finds out I been arguing with myself out aloud, he runs over to old Doc Talley, which fills me full of bromides and says if I don't stop smoking I'll kill myself. I never smoked in my life, but I wouldn't tell the doc that and make him feel bad.

Besides helping me with my study of the mysteries of salesmanship, Judy kept acting as my teacher in other courses, and while it's hard to keep your mind on anything but Judy while she's around, why, I made some headway at that. The way we did was like this: every night Judy marks a certain subject for me to read in my encyclopedia, and then the next day she asks me all about it, and I repeat what I remember. In that way all this knowledge got plastered in my mind, and it stuck there. For instance, ask me about Henry the 8th, wireless, the city of Washington, who invented the telegraph and why, or what's radium, etc., etc.—ask me any of that and I'll give you the low down in a flash! How bout that?

In the encyclopedia I read about a guy which must of been one of my descendants. In round numbers, his name was Claudius Galen and he bounded around during the year 200 D. C. While they's few which can now recall him personally, they's a whole column in the book about him. It seems he was a Greek doctor and he clicked off a lot of little booklets about medicine, and they was just good enough to get his name in the encyclopedia. Well, don't be surprised if *my* name don't get in there right under his in a couple of years. "Galen, Gale—Newsboy, errand boy, printer's devil, bobbin boy, soda jerk, boxer, business king!" Just for the fun of it, look in your encyclopedia about two years from now.

Well, the night before I am due to dally and toy with the middleweight champ, Barbara Worthington, one of the rich and swell-looking flappers from the prep school, stakes herself to a dance at her marvelous home. As the richest people in Drew City, the Spencer-Brocks, has kind of took me under their wings—at least, Spence and his father has—why, I ain't barred from these social whirls no more like I used to be when I was jerking soda for Ajariah Stubbs. I get a regular invitation in the mail, though, of course, it's addressed to "Gale Galen," and not "Six-Second Smith." As a matter and fact, I don't believe Barbara Worthington even knew I'm a fighter, or just what I am doing since I left Stubbs's soda fountain. Well, she knows now!

Rags Dempster blows around in his car in the afternoon and wants to know will Judy go to Barbara's dance with him. Judy says no can do, as she's going

with me. This gets Rags red-headed, and I know he's going to pull some foul play on me for revengeance before the night's over, but I should worry when the best-looking girl in Drew City or any other city turns down a rich man's son and air for me! Nate acts like a raving maniac when he hears I'm going to a dance the night before I fight for the world's middleweight title, and him and Kayo Kelly hides my best clothes so's I can't go out. But I fool 'em by getting a ready-made tuxedo and all that goes with it at the New York Store, and staying away from Mrs. Willcox's boarding house all afternoon with it on so's they can't lock me in my room. I met Judy at Stubbs's drug store at eight like we framed and everything was jake.

I wish you could of saw Judy the way she looked that night—just looking at her, a thing I did practically constantly, give me more kick than you get from knocking the other boy for a row of silos. She's wearing a lowish cut evening gown made out of blue, and if she don't look like something from Heaven then Lake Michigan don't look the least bit wet. Oh, what a knockout she *is*—why, she'd baffle the guy which baffled description! She couldn't of been no nicer to me than she was without causing talk, but still and all I have a terrible time at Barbara Worthington's racket. The reason is because I don't dance a stroke!

The minute we get to that party about ninety guys, with Rags in the lead, rushes at Judy, grabs her program, and begins writing their names all over it for dances. The other girls looks daggers at her, and I look bombs at the boys! Judy manages to save me

four dances, which we got to sit out on the account of my fatal unability to shake a wicked hoof. The results is that about every time I start a conversation with her, and I'm doing myself some good, some clown butts in with: "Pardon me, this is *my* dance, I believe?" and I got to sit there like a sap and see the girl I am insane about dancing around in the arms of one of these dumbells. When she dances with Rags, why, I can't even watch it! Believe me, a guy at a party which can't dance has as much fun as a codfish would have in the middle of a desert!

But when me and Judy does get a chance to go out on the lawn and talk, I work fast. Judy wishes me the best of luck in my scrap with Frankie Jackson, and she thinks it's great that Mr. Brock has took such a interest in me. But between you and me, I think it's even greater that *she* has!

Well, Rags drops out on the lawn every now and then, as he hates to let Judy get out of his sight. Every time he runs into me during the courses of the evening he keeps making cracks which would cause a rabbit to smack a bulldog right in the face. Insulting me in that silky oily manner of his, the words themselves not meaning so much, but the way he says 'em meaning plenty! About a hour of watching Judy being carried off to dance by these fellows and listening to Rags's sarcastical cracks has made me one continual blaze. Rags knows he can ride me heavy this night without no risk to himself, because, naturally enough, I wouldn't think of smacking him for a row of Hindu parsnip bowls in Barbara Worthington's home.

However, when Rags sees he ain't getting no action by picking on me, he plays his ace! I am standing out on the porch looking in at the dancers and waiting for Judy to come out, when along comes Barbara's mother and Rags. I drawed back in the darkness so's they won't bump into me, and I hear Rags telling Barbara's mother that he thinks she ought to know that one of her daughter's guests got in under false pretenses. He says the boy they call Gale Galen is really a prize fighter named Six-Second Smith, and he will point me out to her.

I got one look at Mrs. Worthington's face when she hears that "prize fighter" thing, and that look is plenty for me! I am starting for my things, when I think I better wait and tell Judy I'm leaving. But I don't get much chance. Mrs. Worthington and Rags has saw me, and the next thing the butler comes over with my hat and coat, looks at me like I'm something the cat dragged in on a rainy night, and says in a zero voice that he'll show me the exit. Rags walks over to us, grinning like a hyena, which is what he reminds me of very much.

Then the music stops inside and Judy comes out with the fathead she's been dancing with. She sees me and Rags standing there, and the butler holding my hat and coat, and she trips over to us looking questions by the score. Rags makes no attempt to hide the pure delight he feels at me getting the air and getting it publicly too, because lots of the others is whispering together and looking over at us.

"What's the matter, Gale?" says Judy, passing Rags up.

"Why—eh nothing, Judy," I says, taking my things from this lump of ice called the butler. "Nothing at all, I—I'm going out and get some air. I'll come back to take you home at whatever time you say—that's if you want me to come back for you."

"Oh, why lie about it!" butts in Rags with a snarl. "Mrs. Worthington has quite naturally refused to have her home turned into a lounging place for prize fighters, and, of course, she resents her daughter having had to associate with one, even for——"

He stops short when Judy swings around on him and gives him a glare. Then she turns back to me and smiles her sweetest. "Wait until I get my wraps, Gale," she says, "and I'll go with you!"

They's two faces you should of saw—mine and Rags!

Well, it broke perfect for me, and I could almost of thanked Rags for getting me the gate. Not being fluent at dancing, I didn't like the party anyways, and would of busted away during the first five minutes if Judy hadn't of been there. As it is, I got her all to myself on the account of Rags knifing me. She probably *never* would of left if I'd asked her; now she gets her cloak and takes my arm, paying absolutely no attention to the frantic Barbara Worthington, the cuckoo Rags, and the pleading guys which had dancing engagements with her. When we get outside we find the night is perfection itself, soft and warm and a new moon shining its head off. Borrowing from the nerve

I was saving for my clash with the middleweight champ the next night, I ask Judy will she take a walk to the lake with me, as it's still fairly early. Judy waits so long to answer that I'm just on the brinks of begging her pardon for asking, when she suddenly says "Yes!" and then I'm almost afraid to breathe for fear I'll bust my luck. She stops me from getting too sentimental when I commence thanking her for leaving the party with me. She says she could hardly do anything else when her escort was asked to leave. We are sitting on the bank of the lake, hid from everything but each other.

"Then you didn't do it for *me,* Judy?" I says, terrible disappointed. "You mean you would of left with *anyone* under the same conditions?"

Judy commences plucking at the grass and keeps looking away from me.

"I wouldn't have been there with *anyone,* Gale," she says slowly, "or—*here!*"

Well, I ain't exactly stupid, and the rest of the conservation is nobody's business, now, *is* it?

We got home about eleven, and Nate's sitting on the front porch waiting for me with a four-alarm fire in each eye. He says nothing at all till Judy goes upstairs, and then he gives me a terrible tongue lashing for staying up late the night before the biggest fight of my life. When he gets all through I says I agree with every word he's said, and was he ever in love? With a wild yell Nate throws up his hands and, grabbing a pillow from the porch hammock, he chases me upstairs to bed.

At a quarter of ten the next night I am clambering through the ropes at the Superba A. C. in Jersey City, with Nate, Kayo Kelly, and Shiney Jepps, my handlers, trailing after me. For the first time since I been a leather pusher I get a frenzied outburst of applause *before* I show my wares. The reason for that ain't hard to guess. I am going to fight a champion, and the average fight fan loves to see a champion unchamped. After I rub my shoes in the rosin and sit down on the stool in the corner Nate has picked out, I look around at the ten thousand-odd excited customers which has come to see me and Frankie Jackson prove that self-defense is not only a plea but a art. The champ has resorted to the old trick of making me sit out there in the ring and wait for him, the objects being to get me nervous; but that's a waste of time on Frankie's part, because I have become nerve-proof. I'm telling the truth when I tell you that this battle don't bother me no more than any other. As far as that part of it goes, no matter if I fight Dempsey, I'll never again get the kick out of a box fight that I did out of my first one! I guess it's the same way about a man's first *anything*—hey?

No—it's the crowd which gives me the kick now. It always does, and I look around and study 'em with as much interest as they're studying every move *I* make. For a few minutes I got the undivided attention of bricklayers, bankers, lawyers, pickpockets, doctors, shipping clerks, yeggs, actors, sporting men, and other leather pushers who may box me later and come to see what I got. All around the ring, right

under the ropes in a solid bank, is the hard-boiled sport writers and their telegraph operators. Behind 'em the ringside boxes with plenty of guys in evening dress. I see Mr. Brock, and his friends, and he nods to me. I don't know whether or not he wants me to recognize him when he's with his swell friends, but I take a chance and wave a hand at him. I get a broad smile and a couple of nods back. Shiney Jepps is massaging my stomach. Kayo Kelly, which has just knocked Georgie Neill stiff in the semi-final, is working on the back of my neck and kidding me. Nate's bending down over the ropes, talking to the reporters. I rinse my mouth from the water bottle and wonder whether I'll leave the ring on a shutter or middleweight champion of the world. That's the only two things can happen. I'll never leave any ring able to walk if I'm licked—that's a promise I made to myself!

The droning hum of the mob suddenly turns into wild yells and the stamping of thousands of feet. Frankie Jackson, the champ, hops over the ropes and walks to my corner. His hair's all nicely brushed back, he's freshly shaved, and as he bends over to look at the tape on my hands, the muscles in his tanned arms ripples like little snakes under pieces of brown satin. I can't help thinkin' what a swell-built fellow he is!

"You big stiff!" Nate snarls at him. "You weigh one sixty-five if you weigh a ounce. You got nearly ten pounds on us!"

Frankie grins pleasantly at Nate and shakes my hand warmly.

"Good luck, Kid!" he says. "I hope you can hit!"

"Same to you, Frankie," I says, returning the handshake; "I hope you can take it!"

Honest, you may find it too much to believe, but they ain't no hard feelings at all. I ain't got nothing against Frankie Jackson and he ain't got a thing against me. Yet in a minute we'll be tryin' our darndest to half kill each other, because that happens to be our trade.

A dozen guys which don't mean nothing and some which does is introduced to the impatient crowd, and they all challenge the winner. Then one after the other they come over to Frankie and then to me, shake our hands, and wish us luck. Nate, having picked my gloves from the new set throwed into the ring, begins lacing 'em on my hands. Over the tick—tick—ticky—tick—tick—tick—of the telegraphs under my stool, Nate's pouring a continual stream of instructions in to me: "Make him come to you and look out for his left to the heart! Don't lead with 'at right of yours—he don't like it down below, so work on him heavy in the clinches!" All that and plenty more.

Then he whips off my bathrobe—the blue silk one Judy give me—and jumps down out of the ring. With my gloves on the top rope, I turn around and face the mob which is going nuts with excitement now. The lights go out all over the house, except the blinding ones right over the ring. Then the bell and the panic is on!

Still smiling pleasantly, Frankie Jackson stabs his long left into my face and I come back with a left and right to the body that draws a howl from the customers. Frankie backs away, the smile gone and a thoughtful

look on his face. I crowd him to the ropes, and after missing two well-meant rights, I manage to sock home a left hook to the heart which makes him gasp and dive into a clinch. "How d'ye like him, Frankie?" bellers a elephant's voice over the continual roar.

Frankie don't like me at all, and he proves it by slamming away with both hands to my mid-section till the referee breaks us. One of Frankie's seconds yells for the champ to quit slugging with me and box me instead. Frankie nods and begins dancing around me, shooting that left into my face like a piston rod. I get sick of this and rush him, but he ain't there, and I nearly sprawl on my face when I miss a right swing. The attendance laughs and this steams me up. I took six left jabs from Frankie without a return to get home one right hook. The punch hit Frankie on the side of the head and turned him completely around, making the guys which was just laughing at me go insane screaming for a knockout.

But this baby knows too much for me! He clinches till his head clears, and then the smile comes back and so does the dance, and for the rest of the round he kept away, picking my punches out of the air and cutting me to pieces with that vicious left jab. It seems I just couldn't keep my face off it! At every opportunity I ripped rights and lefts to the body, but as this guy was always going away when the wallops landed they did little more than sting him. I rushed him again just before the bell, and took a straight right on the jaw that didn't do me a bit of good.

A left I couldn't hold back hit Frankie on the nose a

second after the gong—it was a pure accident, though some of the mob hissed. I held out my glove to Frankie and panted: "I didn't hear the bell, Frankie, excuse me!" Frankie shakes my glove. "That's all right," he grins. "I didn't hear it myself." A good kid, hey?

The next six rounds was about duplicates of the first. The champ had settled down to a campaign of simply sticking his left in my face and trying to wear me down with body punishment in the clinches. He never let me set to crash him with my right, which had give him plenty of respect for me after a few applications. Frankie could hit, himself, and don't think he couldn't, but his trick was boxing. He had the prettiest left I ever see in the ring, and on his feet he was chain lightning! In them early rounds he went around me like a hoop around a barrel, keeping out of danger himself and piling up points till he was first and I was nowheres. Unless I could land a lucky punch, it looked like Frankie would beat me from here to Hawaii!

In the middle of the seventh round Frankie must of made up his mind that he had wore me down to the point where I was ready to take a dive, because he suddenly begins swapping swings with me. It took less than a minute to show him his mistake. Frankie feinted with his left, and when I fell for it he drove a wicked right to my stomach. I missed a right and left to the jaw, but landed one right square on his mouth, and he went back on his heels like he run into a fence.

I'm on top of him in a instant, pumping both hands to the body till he's forced to cover his wind, and the

second his arms slid down I crashed a right flush on his jaw. The champ fell sideways, rolling over on his back and then struggling to one knee, while the maniacs outside the ropes leaps on their chairs yowling like wolves. The referee pushes me away and begins to count, but Frankie is up at "seven," full of fight and rarin' to go. Same here! We stood toe to toe in mid-ring and slugged till the crowd shook the roof. Neither of us heard the bell, and our handlers has got to jump into the ring and tear us apart!

Round Eight was very slow, as the pace was beginning to tell on us both. We spent this frame mostly in clinching and getting our wind, and turned four deaf ears to the customers' indignant bellers for us to fight.

The ninth round was the busiest! Frankie come out at the bell with a cold determined look on his face, and he met my wild rush with a volley of straight lefts that brought the blood in a stream. I steadied myself and drove a hard left to Frankie's right eye. Another left to the same place closed that thing for the rest of the fight. But I paid heavy for them two wallops! Coming out of a clinch, the champ throwed me off balance with a left hook to the head and then swung his right to my jaw with everything he ever had behind it.

I see the punch coming and try to duck, but I'm a bit too late. Frankie's glove lands fair and square on the side of my chin and the floor comes up and hits me plunk in the back. It was a terrible punch—terrible! The hardest wallop I ever been hit in my life! The

whole side of my face is numb, and when I open my mouth to breathe I come near screaming with the pain. Getting up off that mat was quite a trick, but I beat the count by a eyelash. I'm swaying back and forth on my feet in a neutral corner, when the bell saves me.

Nate jumps into the ring before the sound of the gong has died out and helps me to my corner. He shoves half a lemon into my lips, and I knocked it on the floor with my glove. I can't get nothing into my mouth—I can hardly get it open! The crowd and the ring and Frankie and everything else is mixed up and going around and around and around. Nate is examining my jaw, and wow how it hurts! I dimly see Nate bend down and whisper, and another guy is pushed up through the ropes. This bird fingers my sore jaw, and then him and Nate talks. I can't hear what they're saying, and I'm wondering is the fight over or what's the idea? Nate leans over to me.

"We're through, kid," he says. "You got a fractured jaw!"

"What d'ye mean I'm through?" I manage to get through my lips. "I got this guy licked!"

I get off the stool and I won't sit down. Quitting is one habit I never picked up. *Never!*

Suppose I *do* quit and get away with it, as Nate's raving in my ear, why, that would only encourage me to quit again. Nothing stirring! Nate tries to push me down, and we struggle around while the mob's wondering what it's all about. The reporters comes crowding into our corner, and then the bell rings for

the tenth round. I remember breaking away from Nate, and that's all I *do* remember till I'm sitting in my dressing room when the fight's over. But here's what "Tad," the famous sport writer, says about that brawl from then on. I clipped it out of the paper:

Gents, this was one for the book! When "Six-Second" Smith flopped on his stool at the end of the ninth frame, it looked like it was time for the customers to go home and argue about the fight. But this two-fisted fighting fool from Drew City had other plans for the evening. With his jaw fractured in two places, his body a raw red from Jackson's terrific pounding in the clinches, Smith raved and struggled with his frantic pilot, Nate Shapiro, who wanted to throw in the old towel and save his boy from further mutiliation or the knockout that seemed as certain as sunset. With only half a minute before the bell, Shapiro, seeing no chance to keep Smith in his corner, drew on his canny ringcraft in an attempt to save a hopeless situation. He knew that if the champion discovered what he had done to Smith's jaw, he'd simply crack him there again and it would be curtains. So he told Smith to drop from the next body punch, take a count of nine, and then get up bent over as if badly hurt. The foxy Shapiro hoped this would make the champ think he's busted one of Smith's ribs and cause him to devote all his attention to Smith's body, leaving the bum jaw alone.

An old trick, men, but it worked! Jackson slammed a left to Smith's wind early in the tenth and Smith went down as if hit with an axe. He was up at nine,

staggering over to the ropes with both gloves pressed against his stomach and an agonized expression on his face. The champion rushed in to finish his man and was met with a terrific overhand right to the head that buckled his knees and put the house in an uproar. Smith then dove into a clinch, where he hung on like a summer cold till the referee pried 'em apart. For the rest of the round, Smith fought a strictly defensive battle, keeping his ruined jaw well covered and occasionally shaking the puzzled champion with a right.

The eleventh round was just one clinch after another and the crowd whistled and hooted, not knowing that one of these boys was fighting with a broken jaw and the other one fighting with a slowly breaking heart, as he slammed this battered gamester in front of him with punch after punch and saw his victim still erect and trying! Down in the press coop, we're getting the *big* kick. We know what the crowd don't—that a single punch on that broken jaw will win the fight. The champ don't know that, either.

Then comes the twelfth and last round and one of the most thrilling finishes to a championship fight in the annals of the ring. Both boys came out with a rush at the bell—the champion determined to finish the thing, Smith, his jaw the size of a house, determined to die fighting. Both miss rights to the jaw and Jackson then shows he has learned Smith's secret. His eye is fixed on that swollen jaw and he pins Smith on the ropes, swinging desperately with both hands to the face. Drunk with punishment, Smith weaves back and forth in front of his executioner, stabbing out feebly

with his left, his right cocked and set ready for the opening he's hoping against hope will come. The arm-weary champ rips a left to the wind and then hooks his right to the busted jaw. The sport writers wince with that blow! But "Six-Second" Smith, this fighting maniac who lives on punishment, rebounds off the ropes and tries two well meant uppercuts, both of which miss. The champ, now sure of himself, measures the reeling Smith with a light left and then sinks his right into the heaving stomach before him. The mob is triple cuckoo as another right to the jaw hangs Smith on the ropes. Then comes the fireworks!

Nate Shapiro, seeing his man helpless, reaches for the sponge and tosses it over the ropes. He's excited and a bum pitcher. The sponge goes clean across the ring and out on the other side! But while it's still in mid-air, Smith fairly pushes himself off the ropes and faces the champion. Jackson sets himself for the finisher, not seeing the sponge. Neither does the referee, though ten thousand voices are calling his attention to it! With a superhuman effort, Smith hooks the champ fair on the jaw with a terrific right. Jackson falls flat on his face, his head bouncing as it hit the canvas. He's as cold as a pawn-broker's eye and no mistake! Smith totters on his feet for an instant, looking at the insane mob with glazing eyes. Then he topples in a heap over the champ's prostrate body. At that same minute, the bell rings, finding both boys on the floor at the end of the most sensational fight the writer has ever seen. If you missed it, it's your own fault!

That's all they is to that, except the newspapers called it a draw. After he's been brung to life, Frankie Jackson comes into my dressing room while a doctor is setting my jaw. When Frankie finds out he broke it in the ninth round, and that I fooled him into losing the chance to knock me with a punch at any time after that, he's burnt up! But he leans over to shake my hand.

"You're a rough kid," he says, "but you *can't* take it!"

I moved the doc's hands away from my busted jaw. "And you're a fast boy, Frankie," I says, "but you can't hit!"

ROUND SIX

THE GALL OF THE WILD

"KNOWLEDGE is power!" says Francis Bacon in the fiscal year of 1624, and Frankie knew what it was all about, don't think he didn't! That snappy remark of his applies to all of us from president to plumber. Maybe you'll kind of curl your lip and say that's fourth-grade copy-book stuff. Well, that's just what it is—but when you get right down to it, ain't it funny how them old copy-book sayings seems to cover everything which comes up in later years? What is these up-to-date nifties, anyways, but the old stuff jazzed up? What's new about 'em. "Strike while the iron is hot!" says Jack Heywood in 1565. "Do your stuff!" says the modern slang writer and gets credit for a wise crack.

You take knowledge in the game I've just quit—box fighting. Like in anything else, the *students* is the champions. What does a scrapper have to know besides a straight left and a right hook? Plenty! A rush of brains to the head now and then is as necessary to a boxer as it is to a banker. For instance, I learned to instantly shift my attack from jaw to body when the other boy didn't seem to like it down below, when to dive into a clinch and when not to, how to

protect myself from a body puncher once we got to close quarters, how to eel out of a tight corner when I'm pinned on the ropes, to stay on one knee till the referee says "nine" if I'm floored—instead of jumping right up groggy and running into a knockout punch—and how to hit straight out from my shoulder or waist instead of swinging wildly like a gate.

Say, when I think what a chump I was when Nate took me from behind Ajariah Stubbs's soda fountain and changed my name from Gale Galen to "Six-Second Smith." I can't understand how I ever stopped *anybody!* All I could do then was hit and take it—not quite enough, no matter what the sharps tell you. Half the first division guys you think is clumsy from your ringside seat is doing fancy work in close where you can't see it which would make your hair curl and *is* making the other boy's hair curl.

Besides, all this, I lived clean and healthy. Plenty sleep, good food, no smoking, and I didn't know whether you spread booze on bread or rub it in your hair. Lots of people seems to think that all boxers is a lot of little or big thugs which spends the time they ain't in the ring beating up innocent bystanders just to be nasty and drinking like famished fish. That's apple sauce. Maybe the pork and beaners does all of that and more, but the *good* ones don't and that's a fact. Even in *winning* fights, the best of 'em takes not a little punishment in the course of a year and you can't do that unless you're in perfect condition—not to-night, or yesterday, or next week, but *all* the time!

Well, I got a three months' lay-off from the ring

through the kind attention of Mr. Frankie Jackson. However, the argument I put up against the king of the middleweights caused a serious epidemic of bashfulness among the other contenders in that class as far as a scuffle with *me* was concerned. When Nate pleads with Frankie to give us another crack at his crown, why, the champ just laughs and says if we want to fight to get a job on the Dublin police force. In twenty-four battles I had win twenty by knockouts and, like Dempsey and many another good boy which has too much stuff for the rest of the field, it seems I have fought myself out of a job.

So, giving up all hopes of getting work in the middleweigh division, I tell Nate to go out shopping and get me a nice, fresh, light heavyweight somewheres and I'll be pleased to slap him silly for a reasonable amount of pennies. I was then twenty years old, stood five foot ten and three-quarters in my nude feet and still had trouble keeping down to 158 ringside—about 164 being my proper poundage—and it seems, like London I'm still growing. Well, Bob Fitzsimmons only weighed a few pounds more when he was bowling over some of the best heavyweights of his time and I got as many freckles as Fitz *ever* had!

Don't fall a victim to the idea that I spent the three months my ruined jaw was healing sitting in my room knitting doilies or nothing like that. In the contrary, what I done with them ninety days was to take a course in a New York business school. I suppose that's a laugh, hey? A prize fighter studying the mysteries of shorthand, advertisement writing, and salesmanship!

Anyways, I take up this business course and also enroll for the evening lectures at Columbia College, because I'm still incurably addicted to ambition—the thing which drove me from one meaningless job to another—a wild and undownable craving to *be* somebody, to get somewhere! I ain't got no blue blood in me; I know that on the account it always come out red when I got cuffed on the nose—a mere detail in my business. But I had too much *fighting* blood in me to be a John Smith in Life's phone book for long!

Judy went to this business school with me, and, of course, that didn't make it hard to take at all. She graduated from Drew City Prep a few weeks after my quarrel with Frankie Jackson, and as her mother has absolutely no connection with the Vanderbilt family or the equivalent, why, Judy got ready to bust into the business world herself so's twelve o'clock would mean lunch at the boarding house and not just noon.

Knockout Kelly, which by that time was keeping steady company with pretty Mary Ballinger, was always riding me for studying at nights instead of stepping out. Kayo claimed life's too short for that kind of business and that education is a great handicap to success. Be ignorant and be a winner, says Kayo.

"I don't know if algebra is pink or green," he tells me one day. "I can't spell necessity and words like that. For all *I* know, North Dakota is the capital of Wyoming. But—I'm clickin' off from three to five thousand smackers a fight, never more than forty

minutes' work, usually twenty. They's millions of college guys workin' two years for the same money. Laugh *that* off!"

"But, Kayo," I says, "ten years from now you'll be through in the ring, and not having no other trick, why, that means you'll be through everywheres! You never save a nickel, so what will you do? You'll be hanging around the cheap fight clubs, picking up a dollar here and there as a handler or a human punching bag for some fellow training for a fight. But ten years from now the college guys which is working cheap at present as newly made lawyers, doctors, and this and that will be making more jack than you ever saw, Kayo, and they'll make it right up to the time they die!"

"Blah!" sneers Kayo. "Be yourself! I ain't bothered about ten years from now or even *one* year from now. I never worry about yesterday or to-morrow. Yesterday's gone and to-morrow I may be gone. To-day's all that bothers *me!*"

With that he walks off whistling "Sing a Song as You Walk Along!"

Kayo didn't have a care in the world—or a *chance*—while he thought like he did then!

Well, just when I'm sitting pretty with Judy and everything is jake between me and the world, I get a terrible shock. I meet her on the stairs going to my room, and if she'd of looked any prettier she'd of fell in love with herself! The net effect on *me* I will leave in care of your imagination.

"How's your jaw, Gale?" she inquires tastefully.

"Perfect!" I says. "The last X-ray shows it's all healed and they's nothing to stop me now from going back into the ring and getting it broke again!"

Judy laughs—like the tinkle of little bells. Then she gets a bit serious. "I hate to think of you going back to the prize ring, Gale," she says. "That was terrible—getting your jaw broken. Why, you might be crippled for life at any time! When *are* you going to give up boxing? It—it would please me a lot if you would, Gale."

"Judy," I says, "to please you I'd dive off the top of Washington's Monument into a glass of water! You know that. But I *got* to say it with right hooks till I get a little bigger bank roll and a little better line on what I was born to panic the world at. I don't seem to know just *what* my trick is yet—I'm what you might call experimenting. I don't want to go back of the soda fountain again, that's a cinch! So I'm just looking around. Boxing is keeping me alive and paying for this synthetic education I'm getting, while I'm trying to find out the thing I do best."

But Judy seems to be peeved. "There are plenty of other things you could do besides boxing," she says slowly, after a minute. She's pulling a cute little handkerchief back and forth between the most beautiful little hands in captivity. "You have a good appearance, personality, and enough intelligence to overcome the—the few rough edges left from your premature contact with the world. I'm sure you would not have the slightest difficulty in getting a good position with a future, almost anywhere. Why—" she

breaks off, with a short, nervous laugh—"why, even *I* have managed to get a job!"

Ain't it horrible that a girl like that has got to work?

"You did, eh?" I says, nothing but ears. "Where?"

Judy gets as red as red itself. She kind of turns her face away from me and I got a sudden premonition that they's a highly unpleasant surprise coming. I am 100 per cent right!

"I'm—I'm going to work in the office of Dempster & Co.," she says, trying to appear careless about it and flopping hard.

Well, you could of knocked me down with a wagon tongue! Going to work for Rags Dempster's old man and Rags himself is now working in the same office, learning the business. Honest, for a minute I'm fit to be tied!

Judy busts up the painful pause. "What's the matter, Gale, are you ill?" she says. But she well knows what's the matter!

"No," I says, "I'm sick. Why, Judy, you *can't* go to work for Rags Dempster's father!"

Up goes Judy's maddening eyebrows and you should of felt the chill in the air. "Oh!" she says. "I can't? Why not?"

"Because—because I—Judy, you know Rags is overboard over you, and him getting you that job is just a scheme of his to—to keep you near him!" I bust out. "As the matter and fact, I must give that dizzy stiff credit for a nifty play, but I ain't going to let him get away with it! Why he'll pester you to death, Judy, and——"

"What on earth are you talking about?" butts in Judy, in well fained and a bit angry surprise. "Rags had nothing to do with my getting a position in his father's office. I applied there and was engaged by Mr. Young, the head clerk. As for Rags pestering me, well, Gale, I feel quite capable of taking care of myself under any and all circumstances. What right have *you* to question my actions?"

"In other words, what *you* do is none of my business, hey?" I says.

"You're not my brother, Gale," says Judy—and the thermometer slides down past zero.

"I don't doubt that," I says. "But I thought I was your boy friend. I guess women is all alike!"

"Indeed!" says Judy, a bonfire in each eye. "You seem to know a lot about women, Mister Gale."

Mister!

"I'm off women for life, Miss Willcox," I says in a dignified way. "I am convinced that the fellow which understands women can also understand what a couple of flies says to each other when they meet on a window-pane! You know Rags Dempster hates the ground I walk on, and yet you go to work with him in his father's office—like that was the only job in the United States of America. It looks like you are giving me a pushing around, Miss Willcox. O. K.—don't be surprised if you read in to-night's paper where I have left for—for Gehenna, or some distant country like that. You made me what I am to-day; I hope you're satisfied!"

With these few remarks, I turn on my rubber heel

and march haughtily down the stairs into the great outdoors. I can be as hard as a rock when I want to. Beautiful women has no effect at all on a fellow of my type, and I made up my mind I would apologize to Judy and get squared up with her at supper that night no matter what concessions I have to make, up to and including my right eye!

I ain't taken three steps up the street when low and behold who do I run into but Rags Dempster. I start to pass him by, but he furnishes me with the surprise of my life by stopping me and holding out his hand with a smile.

"Let's—eh—bury the hatchet, Galen," he says, in that smooth, oily voice of his. "It seems rather silly for us to keep up this childish feud, now, doesn't it?"

I am busy thinking, will wonders never cease? I know there's a catch in it somewheres, but still and all I shake his damp, flabby hand because I'm always ready to meet anybody halfways. I let go Rags's hand and he takes out a gold cigarette case, tapping a cigarette on it, while his smile grows into a wide satisfied grin. "Besides," he says, with a odd glance at me—"besides, the—eh—matter we fell out about is pretty well settled now."

I can feel the hair raising on the back of my neck! "What matter, Rags?" I says, looking him right in the eye—no small feat, as Rags's eyes is of a wandering variety.

"The matter of Judy—Miss Willcox," he says, lighting his cigarette and trying to carry the thing off as a mere nothing. "She's going to work in our office,

you know, in my department, and—well, Miss Willcox and myself have known each other a long time, Gale, and I don't suppose my feelings regarding her are much of a secret to *you*. I thought I'd save you a lot of—eh—a lot of embarrassment, by telling you now that I expect to marry Miss Willcox this winter!"

I can feel I'm as pale as a quart of skim milk and I could of kick myself for not being able to stop my voice from trembling.

"Has Judy—are you and Judy *engaged?*" I stammer.

Rags's leady, gloating eyes tells me he's enjoying my misery to his full capacity. He takes plenty time to answer.

"We—e—ll, not exactly *engaged,*" he drawls. "But ——"

"But, *nothing,* you big stiff!" I cut him off, and my voice ain't trembling now. I'm burnt up, for a fact! "If Judy ain't promised to wed you, where d'ye get that stuff about expecting to marry her this winter? The best thing *you* can do is to leave Judy alone, get me? If she ever tells me that you're trying to take advantage of the miracle that she's working for you, I'll slap you for a Chinese ash can!"

Thus endeth the first lesson.

That night, as they say in the movies, I nailed Judy after supper and apologized for the way I talked to her earlier in the day. She changes like the wild winds, she does for a fact. She ain't a bit sore, and *she's* the one which suggests sitting out in the hammock on the dark back porch to talk matters over. I think both my ears is liars when she asks me, but we go and sit

there and after a while a idea hits me right in the head—a idea which to me is the snake's hips! It's no less than a way for Judy to turn down the job in the carpet factory office and still eat and what not.

"Judy," I says, "the only reason you're going to work for Rags Dempster's father is because you got to take a job *somewheres,* ain't it? I mean it ain't because you particularly like Rags or nothing like that —am I right?"

"I thought we settled all that this afternoon, Gale," says Judy, beginning to freeze. "I think we're letting this conversation grow too personal again. I am going to work for Dempster & Co. because it's right here in Drew City and I have been offered a very good salary—and why I'm allowing you to catechize me like this, I don't know!"

"It's a mystery to me too," I says pleasantly. "However, what I'm getting at is this, Judy. If you had a chance to take another job in Drew City at more wages, would you take it instead?"

"Rather!" smiles Judy.

"Then that Dempster & Co. job is out!" I says joyfully. "Judy, I now hereby offer you the position of my secretary at the salary of fifty bucks a week to commence, with a chance of advancement. No experience is necessary and——"

But Judy has bust out laughing. "Oh, you funny boy!" she says, looking at me through dancing eyes. Then she gazes out into the night. "I wonder what I'll eventually do with you?" she remarks softly to the big oak opposite the house.

Now that's a funny crack, ain't it? What will she do with me? I'm trying to figure that one out, when she lays her beautiful hand on mine, which is only beautiful in a four-ounce glove.

"That's a splendid offer, Gale," she says, "and I'd be tempted to snap it up, only I know why you've made it to me. You don't need a secretary yet, though I know the day will come when you'll have half a dozen secretaries in your own big office. I often visualize you sitting at your desk, directing the destiny of some tremendous business, Gale—don't you yourself?"

"I don't know, Judy," I says. "I'd rather direct *your* dest—eh——"

I'm getting in over my head, so I kind of trailed off!

"Yes, Gale?" says Judy, all attention.

But I'm afraid to gamble with her! I'll tell you why. If I ever lost Judy's friendship, I'd of cooked myself, as sure as you can get good and moist by falling into the ocean. I once read in a book about a couple like me and Judy which was the best of pals till the fellow hauls off one day and asks the girl to wed him. This spilled the beans, because the girl looks sad and shakes her head, saying, to the best of my knowledge: "Oh, Jack, how could you! Our lovely friendship is now broke up—we can never be the same again since you went to work and asked me that! Why couldn't we of remained just chums?" And the guy gets the air. So I held my tongue and played safe, turning the conversation to Rags.

"It looks to me, Judy," I says, "as if you're kidding me about what you really think of Rags Dempster.

You turn down *my* offer of a job and take his and the best *I* can get is a laugh! D'ye know he's going around telling people he expects to marry you this winter?"

Judy's face is like fire. "Where did you hear that tidbit?" she asks.

"Rags told me himself," I says. "I told *him* if he bothered you when you went to work in his office, I'd knock him dead."

Judy jumps up out of her hammock. If she ain't mad, then she's a wonderful actoress. "I wish you and Rags would stop discussing me as though I were a —a town character!" she says, ninety below zero. "And I am not in need of a protector. You've made it very embarrassing for me by threatening Rags, and I'd be glad if you'd wait until I ask you before delivering ultimatums for me. I haven't the slightest intention of marrying Rags, or—or *anyone,* ever!"

And she flounces into the house.

If I got a dollar for every time I got in wrong, I'd have a Rockefeller gnashing his teeth inside of a given year!

Well, for the next few days me and Judy don't exchange half a dozen words, and she even takes to eating her meals either before or after me, so's we don't meet at the table. This kind of treatment steams me up to the point where I have almost decided to move from Mrs. Willcox's boarding house to a New York hotel, when Nate busts into my room one day and hollers he has finally signed me for a fight. The victim's name in round numbers is "Wild Bill" Killoran, which has broke down and confessed to being light heavy-

weight champion of the Pacific Coast. The quarrel is to be staged at the Eureka A. C. in New York, fifteen frames to a decision. I am to get five thousand bucks even—win, lose, draw, or what have you.

I will have to spot Wild Bill at least ten pounds, and from all accounts he's a sweet puncher and nobody's fool. Likewise, this will be my first battle in three months, so I start in training at once for William. Spence Brock is then a inmate of Princeton and his millionaire dad is still taking a interest in me. Both of 'em goes to nearly all my fights, and I have been up to the emperor's palace they call their home half a dozen times, talking over my future with Mr. Brock. I always left him with a little more stuff and a little more ambition than I had when I went up to see him. He is certainly one wonderful man and a billion ain't a dime too much for him!

Well, I am talking to Mr. Brock one day a little while after Judy has apparently broke off diplomatic relations with me, and during the course of the conversation I tell him I think I will leave Drew City flat on its back, as these small burgs cramps my style. Another thing, now that the sweetest girl in all the world has give me the air, why, I don't think they's enough opportunities in a trap like Drew City for a fellow of *my* speed. The way I checked up then, I felt it wasn't going to be no great length of time before I retired from the ring and tried my luck in some game which is less wearing on the features. I had $5,475 in the First National Bank, a $1,800 chumpy roadster, and I was getting around five thousand fish every time I

crawled through the ropes. So I figure I belonged in a hick burg like Drew City the same way a submarine belongs to a bathtub.

But, to my great surprise, Mr. Brock is against me leaving Drew City to take my chances in New York. He tells me the rumor that opportunity knocks once on every man's door is a true one and a ambitious boy don't have to rush off to the city to make his fortune. He himself got his start in a small town, Irontown, Pa., where he's then president of the big locomotive works, after he'd starved trying to knock New York for a goal.

"The fallacy that success is to be found only in the big cities has sent many a promising young man home from them to his native village, beaten and discouraged," he says, chewing on a cigar which costs some heavy money but which for some reason he never lights.

"Some of them have then gone ahead to fame and fortune, proving, of course, that success is never a matter of environment, but of the man! Knut Hamsun, who a couple of years ago won the fifty-thousand-dollar Nobel Prize in literature, could rise no higher than a street-car conductor in Chicago. Lipton drove a horse car in New Orleans, Clemenceau started as a teacher in New York, Masefield was a bartender there. Yet all those men, giving up the struggle in the big cities, returned to their home towns and made their names known to the far corners of the earth! You can do the same, Galen. Never mind New York—the cities have broken far more men than they've ever

made! Look about you *here,* where you have friends and an open, clean record of progress under the most adverse conditions. There's less competition in Drew City and when you discover your 'trick,' as you call it, you will find an interested and sympathetic audience. I, for one, am always ready to give you my attention and help!"

Well, after *that* I just chased New York right out of my mind, and I bet you would of too. With a man like that in my corner I'd be a dumbell indeed to leave Drew City without making a two-handed attempt to put myself over in it, now wouldn't I?

Well, the day I am to swap wallops with Wild Bill Killoran finally rolls around as days will and we break camp at noon, so's to be ready to leave Drew City on 85, the 4.06 p. m. local. As usual, Mr. Brock has a ringside box and he takes Spence and a party of friends from Wall Street with him, so I'm anxious to win this battle in jig time, as whenever I do, Mr. Brock beams around at his friends and acts like he had win the fight himself.

I'm all packed and ready to leave my room, when they comes a familiar knock on the door—a knock which makes me drop my suit-case and gets me tingling all over. I flang the door wide open and there's Judy, smiling at me like she did the first time I ever seen her nearly three years before, standing in the same spot. It's a funny thing, but although I see Judy nearly every day of my life I just can't get used to her pulse-quickening beauty and take her as a matter of course. Every time she comes near me I get a thrill, I do for

a fact! So I just stand there and gape at her like a boob, and I guess my face must of been a show window for my feelings, because she gets a very becoming shade of red.

"I—I just wanted to wish you luck, Gale," she says. "You *will* be careful of your jaw, won't you? I—I'd rather have you *lose* than get hurt!"

"Thanks, Judy," I says. "It's sure fine of you to give me a—eh—to care *what* happens to me, and you coming up to say good-bye was all I needed to put me in perfect condition for this scuffle. I ain't going to lose, and I ain't going to get hurt either. I'll just go in there thinking of you and I'll put this Killoran out for so long that when he comes to his shoes won't fit him!"

Judy laughs, and then she gives me a look which starts my heart trying the difficult feat of leaping right out through my ribs. It looks like *anything* might happen, when this big stiff Nate Shapiro bawls up the stairs for me to snap into it or I'll miss the train. What do I care about missing a train, when they's a chance of me getting in right with Judy again? Say—I'd miss a whole *railroad* for one smile from this panic!

Well, like it says in the old pome, " 'Twas a balmy summer's evening and a goodly crowd was there" when I crawl through the ropes at the Eureka A. C. with the intentions of knocking Mr. Wild Bill Killoran for a row of shanties. Kayo Kelly and "Two-Punch" Jackson is looking after me and I get a pretty fair hand from the mob as I sit down on my stool. I see Spence and his father in their box and we exchange

hand waves and a little farther back I pick out Rags Dempster with some of his cronies. In this case stony stares is exchanged. Wild Bill Killoran is already in the ring, and from where I sit he looks like a tough egg, he does for a fact! The weights is announced as 162½ for me and 174 for my charming adversus. This draws some moans from the crowd, but a twelve-pound handicap means nothing in *my* young life. I figure I'll soon cut Wild Bill down to my size, and after that, a little lower.

Wild Bill starts right out after my goat when we get called to the middle of the ring for instructions. "Do I walk to my corner and wait for the count every time I knock this guy down?" he says to the referee.

"Be yourself, you big boloney!" I snarled. "The only thing you ever knocked down in your life is nickels when you was a street-car conductor. You'll go out of here to-night on a shutter!"

"Shut up!" says the referee to both of us. "Fight with your hands!"

Then the fun began.

Wild Bill shows where he got his name by charging out of his corner like a wounded lion at the bell. He was short with a terrific right swing, and when I duck under his left it whizzed by the panic-stricken referee's ear, only missing him by a scant inch and dumb luck! The crowd howls with joy. I leaped in with a hard left to the head and shot a stiffer right to the heart before Wild Bill knew what it was all about. He looked surprised and begin backing to the ropes, with me following, cautiously. "C'mon, fight!" I grin at

him, and he answers with a murderous right hook to the body which shook me from head to toe and satisfied me that he was one sweet socker and not no bonbon eater by no means! I dove into a clinch, and, when the referee broke us, Nate yells for me to box and not slug. I nod my head and begin to left-hand Wild Bill all over the ring. Killoran couldn't cope with me at this, and in a minute he's tincanning from pillar to post, with me following him up and cutting him to ribbons. Following Nate's instructions, I clinched every time Wild Bill tried to mix matters up, and the bell found us in mid ring, with me pecking away at Wild Bill's crimson profile and Wild Bill punching holes in the air. I run to my corner with a broad smile on my face, a smile I had worn since the opening bell.

But the hard-boiled mob which had give up their jack to see assault and battery give me the royal raspberry for boxing Killoran instead of standing toe to toe and slugging with him. During the rest, some of 'em howled for me to take a chance, and I remarked to Nate that I'm going out in the second frame and see who can hit the hardest, me or Wild Bill.

"You'll do nothin' of the kind!" snaps Nate, sponging me off. "You do what *I* tell you, never mind the crowd—*we're* fightin' this baby, not them cheap squawkers out there! Keep makin' him miss and he'll soon tire. Box him. And lookit, take 'at grin off your pan! It don't mean nothin', and it'll get you a razzin' when this guy shakes you up and you forget to smile. They'll holler: 'Where's 'at smile *now*, Smith?'

and it'll rattle you. You do the fightin' and let *me* do the laughin', get me?"

Killoran come out fast for the second round, but I kept beating him to the punch, stabbing him in the face with my left time after time and then crossing my right to wherever I see a opening. About a minute after the bell, I socked Killoran flush on the jaw with a short inside right and his knees buckled under him. The customers shriek for me to knock him for a row of silos, but he's hanging on to me with both arms like he's drowning. It took the referee quite a spell to tear Wild Bill away from me, and when he did let go his head come up and bumped mine, opening up a old cut over my right eye.

The referee warns him and the crowd hisses, but none of that stops the blood from that cut from blinding me on that side of my face. This butting business gets me red-headed and I tied into Killoran with everything I had in stock! I shot my left to his bobbing head five times without a return and then took a glancing right to the jaw to bury my own right in his stomach. Wild Bill stumbled away and crashed to the mat, face down. When they drop from a body punch they're hurt, and that's a fact! Remember that the next box fight you see. He managed to beat the count and was braced against the ropes, set for a trip to dreamland, when the bell rang.

The third round was the last and the best one of the fight, from the crowd's angle. Wild Bill was sent out to risk everything on landing a knockout punch, and I went in with the objects of stopping him with a couple

of blows. The result was just a little more action, with less principals, than they was at the battle of Santiago! I closed Killoran's left eye with the first wallop, but took a vicious right to the mouth in return which loosened a couple of teeth and drew blood. Devoting my attention to Wild Bill's mid-section, I tossed in a right and left which made Bill say "How do you do?" and a right uppercut knocked him a long ways from normalcy. The average boy would of been through for the evening by this time, but Wild Bill was tougher than a life sentence in solitary confinement! He just shook his head and bored in, ripping both hands to my wind and pretty soon I'm as red between the neck and belt as if somebody had hit me with a bottle of catsup and it broke.

I shift my attack and begin taking shots at Killoran's jaw with my right. One of 'em got through his clumsy defense and he tottered back against the ropes, plainly in distress. He looks around to his corner for advice, and I didn't clout him when his head was turned, though Nate and the mob yelled for me to paste him and razzed me most heartily when I didn't. We boxed carefully for a few seconds, when suddenly Killoran whips over a long left which lands a good two inches below my belt. The crowd roars when I stagger back, biting my lips with the pain and pressing both gloves over the place where that foul punch landed. Oh, I was hurt bad and no mistake! I looked at the referee, and he hesitates a minute while the place is in a uproar and then he taps Wild Bill on the shoulder, warning

him. A lot of good that done me and the babies which had bet on me!

I am in so much pain and so crazy mad that I can't see straight, but I rushed at Wild Bill with what might be called evil thoughts in my brain. I missed two rights, but connected with a left hook to the heart that spun Killoran around like a top. Seeing the shape I'm in, Wild Bill gets a new lease on life and stung me with two sizzling rights to the chin and a left uppercut that nearly tore my head off. Well, I can't really untrack myself till I'm hurt, as Mr. Killoran soon found out! I rushed him to the ropes and took all the fight out of him with a torrid right swing to the wind. He starts to back pedal and I dropped him to his knees with a one-two punch to the jaw. He waited for "nine" and then he got up, groggy. All I can hear around me is: "Knock him out, Smith! Knock the big stiff out!" and "Go on, kid, take him!"

I set myself to oblige the cash customers, when Killoran deliberately crashes his right below my belt again. This time the foul did the business! I got dizzy and awful sick at my stomach and kind of slid slowly to the floor, doubled over in a knot like a pretzel. The crowd has went crazy and lots of 'em are rushing for the ring, but they don't bother *me* because the pain has drove me crazier than they are! The next thing the referee is chasing Killoran to his corner and telling the maniacs out in front that I have win the fight on a foul. Then Nate and Kayo Kelly is bending down over me and somebody says: "Let the doctor pass through here, you guys!"

At this critical point I passed out for the time being.

When I come to I am in the dressing room with my handlers busy working over me. Nate is standing beside me with a serious look on his face.

"What did I do—get knocked?" I says, kind of dazed.

Nate grins and commences to tell me what happened, and though I'm still kind of goofy I gradually remember Killoran fouling me. The pain, which is coming back, is a great aid to my memory. Well, I am good and mad and don't think I ain't. I don't want to win no fights like that—I want to knock 'em dead or get knocked dead—no draws or referee's decisions, or newspaper verdicts means anything to me! Then who walks into the dressing room but Mr. Wild Bill Killoran, some sport writers, Rags Dempster, and Spence Brock.

"What's the idea?" snorts Nate, running to the door. "We ain't giving no party here!"

"Just wanted to see how badly your boy was hurt, that's all Nate," says one of the newspaper guys.

"Hurt?" sneers Wild Bill, shoving his ugly face up to me. "Where would he get hurt? He didn't *like* it, that what's the matter with him! He got away with murder, claimin' that foul. The punch that put him down landed on that glass jaw of his!"

"That's correct, gentlemen," butts in Rags Dempster to the reporters. "I saw the blow land!"

"You're a liar!" hollers Nate. "As for *you*, you big yellah hound—" he begins, turning to Wild Bill.

"I'll knock *you* stiff, too, if you open your mouth to me!" butts in Killoran, swinging around on Nate.

Well I'm boiling over, so I get up. "You won't knock nothing stiff!" I says to Wild Bill. "I had you steadied for a knockout when you deliberately fouled me, not once, but twice. I don't like to win fights that way. I like to win 'em *this* way!"

With that, I shot out my left and Killoran's head snapped back. The bunch yells and begins milling around us and Wild Bill caught me on the ear with his ungloved right first. But I knew where he couldn't take it, so I ripped both hands to his wind. He bent over and I measured him with another left which straightened him up and then I crashed a terrible right to his chin. He floundered backward into the reporter for the "News," and when the reporter stepped quickly away, Wild Bill slid to the floor, dead to the world. So I got my knockout after all!

Nate found out later that Rags had dropped a thousand bucks on the fight, betting Wild Bill would stop me before the limit. I certainly was sorry to hear that. I wish he had dropped a million!

On the way back to Drew City, I get to thinking again about Judy going to work for Rags Dempster's old man. They must be *some* way to prevent that from coming to pass, I keep telling myself, and then all of a sudden I sit up straight in my seat. I got a idea again! Nate's stable was then composed of half a dozen leather pushers, including me, and when I wasn't fighting or studying I was doping out different ways of getting publicity for all of us. In fact, I cooked up several

pieces which Nate managed to get on the sporting pages, making him think I was the turtle's wings as a press agent. There was also a whole lot of correspondence connected with matching us up for fights and Nate had been taking all his letters over to the Commercial House and having Mary Ballinger write 'em. Well, *my* idea was to have Nate open up a regular office in Drew City like all the big-time fight managers does in New York, put in a filing system, telephone, desks, and all this sort of thing and hire a girl, to viz., Judy, to take charge, answer mail and the etc.

At first Nate says not so good, because he loves to keep down expenses, but after a while when I says I'll split Judy's salary with him, why, he gives in.

I don't say nothing at all to Judy till a week later, when we got our office in the First National Bank Building all set. Then I drive her over to see it. Well, she's just delighted, that's all, and right there's where I butt in with my offer of a job as stenographer extraordinary and secretary plenipotentiary. Judy begins to hedge and says am I sure we are doing enough business for all this outlay, and I says wait till she sees the mail we get every day and she'll think we're running a puzzle contest. Finally, after plenty argument, she agrees to come over with us, with the proviso that if they ain't enough work to give us a excuse to pay her fifty a week, she'll leave us flat. I ask her can I go with her to see Rags Dempster's face when she quits his office and tells him where she's going to work and she says absolutely no, but she laughs.

Well, the very first day Judy's on the job I get a

tough break. She's waiting for the sacks of mail to come in so's she can answer it and earn her jack and all the letter man brings us is a bill for the office furniture. She shakes her head and starts for her hat, and the thought that she's going to quit after I have went to all this trouble to keep her under my wing nearly floors me. But I am a idea-getting fool! We're alone in the office and I called across the room to her:

"Just a moment, Miss Willcox! You was supposed to take dictation and the like here, was you not?"

She looks surprised at the tone of my voice and the "Miss Willcox," but she nods her head yes.

"O. K.," I says, very stern. "Kindly be so kind as to sit down at that typewriter. I got a important letter to get off and this has all the earmarks of a busy morning!"

With a kind of a puzzled look at me, Judy takes off her hat, sits down at the typewriter, takes up a pad and pencil and stares at me.

"All right," she says. "I'm ready!"

I cleared my throat. "Take this letter," I says. "To Whom It May Concern—Mr. Gale Galen, nee Six-Second Smith, future light heavyweight champion of the world and even more future business king, would like to announce that he is—is—eh—wildly in love with—with—a certain party by the name of—of—eh—just leave that space blank!"

"But—but I've already filled it in!" says Judy—and then she gets as red as a four-alarm fire and would of tore the paper up, but I snatched it out of her hand.

I'm spreading it out on the desk, when Judy's voice

stops me. "Gale," she says, "do you want me to stay here?"

"I'll say so!" I says.

"Then tear that paper up without reading it—*instantly!*"

I had it tore before the last word left her beautiful mouth. Say, ain't girls funny? Why did she write in her name if she didn't want me to see it? While she was in the act of doing it, I seen her write down "Judy Willcox" on her pad, right after "I am wildly in love with a certain party by the name of—" I didn't study shorthand at that business school for nothing, or write Judy's name in that language eight hundred times without knowing what the shorthand marks is for it, when we made 'em up ourselves!

ROUND SEVEN

THE KNIGHT THAT FAILED

PRETTY soon I will have a education which don't have to take it's hat off to nobody, yet the nearest I ever been to college was when I slap Kid Michaels stiff in Cambridge, Mass., and I'm forced to pass Harvard on the ways to the fight club. I am plying myself with knowledge of this and that by the kind assistance of books, for the reasons that I would like to pass a fight club some day on the ways to Harvard.

Having Judy in our office where I could see her all day long was like putting a ham bone just out of reach of a chained collie. But I figured I'd bust that chain with education, ambition, and a six-figure bank roll.

I am plowing through a serial the other night called "Fortunate," by Mr. Ludwig Tieck, a poet which did his stuff when you and I were young, Maggie, and he says: "To a sensible man, there is no such thing as chance!"

Ludwig said a mouthful. Personally, I'm satisfied that luck and chance is snares and delusions, as whosthis says. The fellow which has reached the top of the heap and is called a lucky stiff by the failures is simply lucky in having the determination to work hard, the ability to laugh off discouragement, and the

pep to keep the rust off his ambition. Having gave luck a thorough tryout, I am in the position to tell you something about it. Depending on luck cost me—but I might as well spill the whole business and be done with it!

A few days after I stop Larry Forbes—a tough egg—in five rounds at Philadelphia, Nate gets a cable from Mr. Haskins, the big English promoter, offering us three fights at the National Sporting Club, London, Eng., where the Prince of Wales must be getting sick and tired of feeling English heavies: "Better luck next time!" Well, naturally enough, this little incident gets me all excited. I had never been farther away from the United States than Coney Island, being too young at the time the draft was all the rage, and here's what has all the earmarks of a chance to tour Europe. So I hop in my nifty chumpy roadster and go to our office to talk this European expedition over with Judy.

She's sitting at her desk giving our brand-new typewriter a cuffing and she looks sweeter to me than a glass bowl shortage would look to a goldfish.

"Good morning, Judy," I says, putting down with the greatest of difficulty a wild impulse to kiss her. "Speaking of anchovies. I'm going to London!"

The clicking keys stops like magic. Judy looks up at me and they's plenty surprise inlaid in her navy-blue eyes as she lays down her notes.

"Of course, you're joking," she says.

"Of course, I *ain't!*" I grins, sitting on the side of her desk. "Nate just got a flash from King George's home town offering us thirty-five thousand dollars and

traveling expenses for three scuffles with three set-ups over there. Ain't we got fun?"

I think she'll be tickled silly, but, in the contrary, she seems exceedingly peeved.

"Gale, how much of your ring earnings have you saved?" she asks, like it's a serious matter.

Well, that's a horse of a different tint. I reach in the inside pocket of my coat and bring forth my bank book—one of the most interesting novels I have yet run across in my studies.

"I only got twenty thousand, eighty-six dollars and nineteen cents," I says. "Nothing at all, Judy."

"Nothing at all?" she says, sitting up straight. "Why, that's a whole lot of money! When you were a soda clerk for Ajariah Stubbs at twelve dollars a week, Gale, you would have thought it wealth beyond your wildest dreams. Now, it's nothing at all! Why ——"

"But listen, Judy," I interrupt, "I'm going to turn in this dinkey little tin-can-on-a-roller-skate I got and get a Pelham twin-six Sedan. That's going to hit me for about twelve thousand berries. But wait till you see it, Judy; I bet you'll get as big a kick out of riding in it as I will. Why, the front seat alone on one of these boats would hold the United States Senate without no trouble at all!"

"Indeed!" says Judy, kind of cold. "Well, *I'll* never ride in it, that's certain!"

"What have I done *now,* Judy?" I says, in astonishment. "Has anybody put in a rap for me, or what is the reasons you won't ride in my sedan?"

"Because," says Judy firmly, "I refuse to be a party to your spending any such absurd sum as twelve thousand dollars for an automobile—or—or *anything!* Why, that's all a millionaire would spend for a car. You've only just bought the one you have now. What's the matter with it?"

I am commencing to feel the bit red in the face. "Well—I—they ain't enough class to it, Judy," I says. "I am getting in the public's eye more and more every day now and a fellow in *my* position has *got* to put on a little dog!"

I see Judy's thrilling lips quivering and then a smile, which makes my blood tingle and would yours too, opens 'em wide. She lays her hand on my arm and I tremble, like I always do when she touches me.

"Oh, Gale—you foolish boy!" she says softly. "When are you going to grow up? So you think yourself famous, because you've had some little success as a prize fighter? That sort of recognition doesn't mean anything, Gale. Don't you know there is a vast difference between fame and notoriety? Where are the high ideals and the stanch ambition that took you from behind a soda fountain? Are you going to disappoint me and let this passing prosperity blind you to the big things that still lie before you? Give up prize fighting *now*—as you promised yourself you would when you had made enough money to live on while looking about for your life work. You have twenty thousand dollars—why, there are twenty thousand things you can do! A small business of some kind, perhaps, or—but that will work itself out, if——"

"Judy, twenty thousand's nothing startling *these* days, honest it ain't!" I butt in. "But with the thirty-five grand I'll get from these fights in London I'll have a *real* bank roll and then I'll hang my gloves on the wall for good, no fooling, Judy! Why, think how that trip across will broaden my mind and—eh—and all that business."

"You're evading the issue, Gale," says Judy, shaking her pretty head. "You don't *want* to give up boxing! You—you're actually *proud* of your profession. I can read that in everything you say and do! You *do* like to fight, don't you?"

With that she gets up from the desk and walks over to the window, looking out on Drew City and tapping her lead pencil on the pane. I get up, too, and stand beside her.

"Judy," I says, picking my words carefully, because I don't want to get in wrong with this eye-widener by no means—"Judy, I *do* get a kick out of box fighting, but not in the way you think. Of course they's a thrill in a hard-won battle, the roar of the mob, the plunk of your glove against body or jaw, and the fact that boxing is a man-to-man affair, not team against team, like baseball, football, basketball, and them other sports. That's the main thing which makes prize fighting so popular—it's a two-man struggle, and while you watch it you can put yourself in the place of either! You don't get that kind of a angle in watching two *teams*. But the big thrill I get out of being a leather pusher is the fact that it's the only thing to date at which I have *meant* something. Judy, I'm getting somewheres

as a boxer, I'm a success at it, what I mean—and you can't laugh *that* off!"

"Any husky longshoreman could be the same!" she sniffs.

"Don't you believe it, Judy. There's thousands of huskies in the game, but there's only eight champions!" I tell her.

"Oh, I don't want to argue with you, Gale," says Judy, kind of impatient. "If you've made up your mind to remain a prize fighter, I don't suppose anything I might say would change you."

"But I *ain't* made up my mind to remain a prize fighter," I says. "Not by a long shot! I have simply made up my mind to stay in this game till I'm a champ. At everything else I've tried my hand at since I been eight years old I been nothing more than a number on a pay roll, holding a meaningless job. I didn't amount to nothing, Judy, and I'd just as soon be *dead* as be that way! My motto is: 'Stand out from the mob at —*anything!* Do your stuff! Don't just live and die like a blade of grass—stepped on by everything from laborers to millionaires, ugly by itself, useless except in mass formation and only useful then as fodder!' They's millions of fellows like that, Judy, but *I ain't one of 'em!*"

"Those are admirable precepts," says Judy, coming back to her desk again. "But what has that to do with your remaining a boxer?"

"Just this," I says. "Like I told you, Judy, before I begin scrapping, I was George W. Nothing. Well, it's different now! Why, even in Europe they've heard

of me—look at that offer from London. I got a following, I get big money for my services, and the sport writers rate me among the leading fighters in the game. If I was to step down before I've win the light heavyweight championship of the world, I'd feel I hadn't played my hand out. It would slow me up in anything I tried after leaving the ring, Judy, it would for a fact! This is the first chance I've had to get to the top in anything. Let me go through with it and if I do win the title I'll quit the ring and tackle some other game with a bigger future. Having been a champ at one trade will help me a hundred per cent to be a champ at another!"

"Well, maybe you're right, Gale," says Judy after a minute, which I use in thinking how long will I have to wait and what will I have to do to get her. "But I don't quite agree with the reasoning that makes your fighting a necessity to your future success. However, good luck to you, and I'll continue to help you in any way I can. What books have you been reading lately?"

Glad to change the subject, I tell her, and after trying me out on what I've already waded through she lays out my reading course for the coming week. Before I leave, I tell her the $12,000 Pelham sedan is out, as far as I am concerned. Judy was right, there's no two ways about it. What a sapolio I'd of been to pay that much jack for a car which I needed the same way I needed another forehead. Like she said, the money was commencing to go to my head—where I suppose there was the most room!

While Nate was trying to make up our minds about

this trip to London, we got a letter from Denver Nolan, the biggest fight promoter in captivity, which had just built a new arena in New York. Nolan wants to put me on with Jimmy Hanley, light heavyweight champion of America, for his opening attraction, figuring that bout will jam his club to the doors. The English flash, Gunner Slade, light heavyweight champion of the world, had agreed to risk his title in a quarrel with the winner. As there's sure to be plenty pennies in it for us, why, Nolan's proposition puts off the ocean voyage. This tickles Judy silly and I didn't feel near as disappointed that I ain't going across as I thought I'd be. I don't care *what* they got in Europe, they ain't got no Judy Willcox and what else *is* they?

For the next week, running back and forth to New York fixing things up with Denver Nolan keeps Nate busy. I'm busy too—studying my books, doping out schemes which will get me and Nate's other scrappers free publicity on the sporting pages, and working out lightly a couple of hours the day with Knockout Kelly and Two-Punch Jackson.

Well, when I stepped in and gummed up Rags Dempster's plans by hiring Judy for our office, Rags goes up in flames and blows his father's office to enter Princeton, with all the rest of the rich bunch from the swell prep school. A few weeks later he busts into the limelight by graduating from college while still a freshman, no small feat. His folks is in Europe and Rags had been stepping high, wide, and handsome since they left, bounding around with a mob of fast guys like himself, which if they had a cent apiece would

have much more money than brains. They was having a wild party in a roadhouse just outside of Drew City one night, with bootleg flowing like Niagara Falls, when along comes the revenue babies. They pinched the roadhouse, taking everybody's name, and on the mad dash home, Rags, which must have been lit up like a Christmas tree, crashes into a fence with his car. One of the girls gets a broken arm and one of the fellows gets so badly bunged up he's got to be carted to the hospital. Well, it all got in the papers on the account of everybody in the party coming from big families and it was the town scandal for many's the day. The minute it gets to teacher's ears at Princeton, why, Princeton gives Rags and his playmates the air. In a few days Rags is back in his father's office again and he seems to be *proud* of all the stuff which was in the papers about him. But they's plenty people says when they pass him on the street, sneering and stuck up as usual: "Wait till his father comes back from Europe and it'll be different!"

I can't figure this fellow Dempster, and that's a fact. Imagine doing anything to risk a college education! I would of parted with a leg for the opportunities this dizzy dumbell tossed airily away. A rich father, a bright future, swell friends, college, autos—*everything*. All that I've been breaking my neck to get ever since I been old enough to know what it's all about, this bird has presented to him in the cradle, and he let it slide!

Well, Nate finally gets Denver Nolan to talk turkey with the regards to my salary for a quarrel with Jimmy Hanley, and the battle is carded for the middle of the

following month. For some reason, Hanley has me pegged as a set-up and he thinks ten minutes is ample time for him to get in shape to flatten me. We are scheduled to go fifteen frames to a decision and I seen in one paper where Hanley says he don't expect the fight to go over a couple of rounds. It turns out he's a bum guesser. It didn't go that long!

Hanley is guaranteed $40,000. Being the cheaper help, I got to be satisfied with a scant twelve thousand and the only guarantee *I* got is one from Hanley's manager that his champ will smack me for a Turkish waffle iron. That's applesauce to me, because I have saw this Jimmy Hanley work, and, champ or no champ, he looks like he was made to order for me. And twelve thousand kronen for making him like it—oo, la, la!

Well, a short time before this setto, Spence Brock drops into the gym one afternoon and says he'll come over to Mrs. Willcox's boarding house that night and pick me up, because his father is going to have some friends from New York over to their place which is interested in me and he'd like to have 'em meet me. So after supper I get into my new Tuxedo which I pay $100 for at the New York store and go over. If I had of been Vincent Astor or Babe Ruth, I couldn't of been treated no nicer by one and all.

Besides Mr. Brock, they's four or five other dignified-looking old guys sitting out on the big glass-covered pazazza in nobby Tuxedos the same as me, smoking and drinking—well, what they are drinking is nobody's business. Anyways, me and Spence takes

grapejuice when the house boy pitty-pats around for our *order*. I get introduced to everybody and they all shake hands and when Spence whispers to me that they's about fifty million bucks represented by these four or five men, why, I get quite the thrill. I pay strict attention to everything they say and do, so's when I get to be a millionaire I will at least know how to carry it off.

But if *I'm* getting a kick out of sitting around with all these money kings, why, they seem to be getting a kick out of *me,* too! Which strikes me as being kind of comical, because I'm Mr. Nothing himself right then. But Spence tells me they're all fight fans like his father and it is as much of a treat to them to be on familiar terms with the coming champion as it is for me to be there, if not more so. A bank president offering a heavy loan would get no more attention from 'em than I'm getting, says Spence, and he calls my attention to how his father is bragging about how long he's knew me and the etc. These birds is under a heavy strain during their business hours, Spence tells me, and this is so much pure fun for 'em—does 'em good, he says, to relax and talk about something else besides stocks and bonds. All rich men has hobbies, he adds, and *I* have become his father's hobby.

I suppose another thing which give me some standing with Mr. Brock's pals was the fact that I am there in a tux the same as they are and didn't show up in no cap and sweater and bust somebody in the nose just to be nasty, like maybe they figured a prize fighter would do. Mr. Brock draws me out on how I'm com-

ing along with my studies and he asks me questions about different subjects and different books he knows I been reading. Every time I answer him I catch his friends glancing from one to the other kind of surprised, and you ought to see Mr. Brock throw out his chest and beam around at 'em as much as to say: "This boy's the trout's ankles, hey?"

Well, finally I look at my watch and it's nine o'clock, and as Nate insists on early to bed and early to rise when I'm training for a bout, why, I get up and wish everybody good night. They all stand up and shake hands with me, saying they are glad to of met me and they will see me again when I fight Jimmy Hanley. They're going to have ringside boxes and they hope I win. So I says I hope so myself, as far as that goes. So that was all settled.

That interview give me quite a kick! And why wouldn't it give me a kick to know a man like Mr. Brock was for me? Don't get the idea in your head that I had any plans to quit trying or ease up on the pace I'd set for myself because I had a millionaire for a ace in the hole. The only support I wanted from Mr. Brock, or even from Judy, was their encouragement and attention to my efforts to be a success. I supplied the rest of the ingredients, all by myself!

Spence walks home with me from his house that night, and on the ways he wants to know if I can bust away from my training for one afternoon the following week to see the Brooklyn Handicap run out on Long Island. The pet of his father's racing stable, "Knight Errant" was entered in it, and Spence claimed

the big race would be a spread for this horse, which only a few days before had broke the track record in a private workout.

"If you have a couple of thousand lying around loose —as you must have, with the purses you've been getting for your fights lately, you bloated plutocrat, here's a chance to make a lot of quick, easy money!" Spence wound up, "Father thinks Knight Errant will be five to one, at least, and he'll win as sure as fate, or else ——"

"Or else he won't!" I butt in, grinning. "I don't know a thing about racing, Spence, and all I know about horses is that they eat a wicked oat. As for GAMBLING on 'em, well——"

"Who said anything about gambling?" Spence interrupts. "A bet on Knight Errant to win the Brooklyn is no gamble, Gale, it's a copper-riveted cinch! But suit yourself, of course. Far be it from *me* to lead you astray. I'm going to bet a thousand on Knight Errant myself and he'll go to the post carrying all of dad's money that the books will take. He gets in with an impost of only a hundred and ten pounds—a *feather* for him, Gale—and the best jockey in the East, Donovan, will have the leg up. Why, he'll win by himself! At any rate, try and get away to see the handicap, even if you don't bet a penny. The crowd, the excitement, and the soul-tingling thrill of a blanket finish will give you an awful kick!"

It did give me an awful kick and no mistake!

I lay awake a oversize hour that night, thinking about Spence telling me that Knight Errant will be

unable to lose the Brooklyn Handicap at big odds. I had never been much of a gambler, mostly because until very lately I never had no spare jack to devote to this worthy purpose and didn't believe in luck. Still and all, I couldn't imagine Mr. Brock being wrong about *anything,* and if *he's* sure his horse will win—and at *five to one!* . . .

I simply couldn't get to sleep and that's all there was to it! I remembered reading somewheres that if you will merely close your eyes and begin counting imaginery sheep jumping over imaginery fences you will slip right off to dreamland. So I began counting, but I didn't count no sheep! What I am counting is dollars, like, should I bet a thousand on Knight Errant I would win five thousand and should I bet five thousand I would win twenty-five thousand and should I bet ten thousand I would win fifty thousand—and—well, the last I remembered before dropping off to slumber I am a trifle over a hundred thousand winner!

The next morning I nail Nate at breakfast.

"What d'ye think of Knight Errant in the Brooklyn Handicap?" I ask him, trying to be kind of careless about it.

"Hey, listen," says Nate. "Lay off the bang-tails, kid; they have kept *me* poor and broke wiser guys than either of us!"

"Applesauce!" I says. "I asked you a question—what d'ye think of Knight Errant?"

"He won't be in the money!" sneers Nate. "'At beagle's a sprinter, and a mile and a eighth's too much race for him. Cirrus will win 'at scramble from here

to Brazil. He couldn't lose if he left his legs in the paddock!"

"But would they let him *do* that?" I says, with a sarcastical grin, and Knockout Kelly laughs.

"Both you guys is comical to me," says Kayo. "Knight Errant and Cirrus, hey? Blah! A couple of Airedales! Mad Hatter's *my* feed-box special. He'll tin-can in! I'm parlayin' that bet right back on Postmaster to cop the last race. If they both come through, which they naturally will, I win forty-five hundred on the day! That's tough, hey?"

I leave 'em, still arguing, because that remark of Kayo's about parlaying his bet gives me a wonderful idea. Like a flash, I see a chance to quit the ring immediately after my fight with Jimmy Hanley, with a bank roll which would startle Vanderbilt. Then I can pick out a business of my own and maybe Judy will come in as a partner, and not only in the business either! I can't get to the bank quick enough.

Without saying a word to nobody—but the paying teller—I draw out all of my $20,086.19 but the eighty-six nineteen. Then I got down to Kale Yackley's cigar store and poolroom. Kale takes bets on the races, ball games, fights, and the like and sends 'em over to a big bookmaker in New York. He gets a heavy play from the men which works in the carpet factory and a couple other big plants. I ask Kale will he take a bet on Knight Errant to win the Brooklyn handicap.

"That's what I'm here for," smiles Kale. "How much?"

"Twenty thousand dollars," I says, calmly pulling

out a package of brand-new thousand-dollar bills. *"And I want it all parlayed back on me to knock out Jimmy Hanley!"*

Kale's face was a movie as he gazes at the money, his eyes popping out so far you could of knocked 'em off with a can. But that don't bother *me,* I figure if I'm going to gamble at all, why, I might as well plunge like a man—take a chance of winning all or losing all, like Cæsar, Napoleon, and them other Big Leaguers done. They's no kick in risking anything less!

When Kale gets where he can talk, he stutters that he'll have to call up "Big Bill" Jacobs, the bookmaker in New York, and see if he'll take a bet as heavy and as cuckoo as mine. After a while he comes back, muttering and shaking his head. But he takes my jack and gives me a ticket calling for $20,000 on Knight Errant to win, at closing prices, and if the horse wins the entire loot is to go back on me, at prevailing odds, to knock out Hanley. "A sucker bet!" remarks Kale, handing me the ticket. I paid no attention. I am thinking if Knight Errant wins at five to one *I'll go into the ring with Jimmy Hanley carrying a hundred thousand dollars of my own money that I'll knock him out!* My whole future's at stake, yet I might say I was as cool as a cucumber—if I wanted to be a liar. Later, I told Spence what I done and Spence says good for me, but I notice his eyes looks worried.

Well, I go over to our office after making the bet with half a mind to tell Judy. Going up the stairs, I suddenly remember that she's away, having took her mother over to New York to see a big eye doctor.

I'm coming down again, when who do I bump into at the first landing but Rags Dempster. I would of passed him without a word, but he grabs my arm and hangs onto me like he's drowning.

"For God's sake, Galen, give me ten minutes of your time!" he pants. "I'm in a terrible fix!"

I look at him in amazement. He seems to me like he's two inches from the hystericals and if I didn't know prohibition was in our midst I would swear he's been drinking heavily—a favorite drink of his any more. I'm so surprised at the shape he's in, wild-eyed and trembling, that I don't stop to think of what a terrible nerve he's got coming for help when he's in a jam to the fellow he's fouled a million times. Still and all, if he's really in trouble I can't turn him down cold without a hearing. I wouldn't want nobody to do that to me. So I told him to come on upstairs to the office.

A half hour later Rags is sitting at Judy's desk with his head buried in his arms—crying like a baby. I'm walking up and down the floor in a trance, but even in the trance I notice that Rags is sitting in Judy's chair and I stop walking long enough to make him get up and sit somewheres else. My mind's in a whirl, it is for a fact, because Rags has just told me he's stole ten thousand bucks from his father's office and dropped every nickel of it at roulette in a New York gambling house.

Sweet Mamma, what a trap *he's* in! I suppose after what he's done to me I should of been tickled silly that he's up against it proper, but I ain't particularly pleased,

at that. I can't see many giggles in *anybody* getting the worst of it, can you?

But the thrilling part of Rags's story is the fact that his father will be back from Europe the following day and they don't seem to be no way out for Rags at all. First his father will hear about him being throwed out of college and the reasons why, and on top of that will come the knowledge that his son is a crook. Between moans, Rags tells me his father is what you call a hard man and not only will he cut off a finger nail, but they's more than a even chance that he'll send him to jail for good measure!

Well, they's something pitiful in seeing a man weep —and something disgusting, too. So I slap Rags on the heaving shoulders and tell him to snap out of it and I'll help him. After all, I think, this bird has been going down steadily while I been going up. Maybe the breaks has been against him.

Then, again, I figure to have a fortune when Knight Errant wins the handicap and I smack Jimmy Hanley silly, and it looks like I have drew away from Rags in the race for Judy, too. All together, I seem to be sitting pretty and I remember in the Bible which Mrs. Willcox gives me it says: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink!" So I finally pull Rags together and send him away with my word that I'll loan him the jack to make his shortage good.

As I have bet every dime I got in the world on Knight Errant, why, getting together them ten thousand bucks for Rags is something of a trick and don't think

it ain't! I didn't know *nobody* I would ask for that much dough, even if I needed it for myself. Still, I got it! It was a case of where they's a will, they's ten thousand dollars."

After a two-day tongue battle with Denver Nolan, I got him to advance me ten thousand and I agree to call my twelve thousand guarantee for the Jimmy Hanley fight square. I lose two thousand bucks by playing Lady Bountiful for Rags, but I think what will a mere two thousand mean to me after I win my bet? Anyways, I give Rags the money and my word of honor that I won't tell nobody nothing about it.

When the day of the Brooklyn Handicap rolls around I drive over early to the Aqueduct track with Judy in my chumpy roadster. There was no more people there than there is in South Dakota and getting seats in the grand stand was a considerable feat, but we got 'em. There's three races before the big handicap, but they don't mean nothing to me, though I holler my head off with the rest, at a neck-and-neck finish in the steeplechase.

The excitement seems to hit Judy too, and she's having the time of her life! With her cheeks flushed a rosy red and her beautiful eyes sparkling like sapphires in a ring, she's a sight there ain't nobody forgetting overnight. She gets a third look from everybody and maybe I don't feel proud to be with her when them necks twists around after us!

Well, nothing will do but she has got to bet on a horse and when I says wait till the Brooklyn Handicap is over and *I'll* bet with her, she laughs and says I

have been talking about nothing but that race since morning and anybody would think I had a fortune bet on it. Sweet Grandpa, if she only knew what I *did* have at stake! I ain't told her a word about it, I want to surprise her after the race—and that's what I done.

However, she closes her eyes and sticks her hatpin through the program for the third race. The pin goes through the name of a horse entitled Babbling Brook, and Judy sends me down to the betting ring with two bucks to lay on that baby for her! When I commence to tell her what a foolish way that is to gamble when she don't know nothing about the horse and just picked it blind, she starts to get sore, so I go down and bet her two dollars on Babbling Brook. I got my mind made up that when this goat runs last I will give her back her money and tell her I was too late to get it down.

Babbling Brook win by two lengths at twenty-five to one!

The next race is the Brooklyn, and by the time them horses is on their ways to the post I'm in terrible shape. The mob rushes to the rail and banks twenty deep against it—the buzzing, rumbling roar of their excited voices coming up to me in the grand stand just like it comes over the ropes to me in the ring.

I am trembling like a leaf and though I sink my teeth in my lower lip that don't seem to stop it. I borrow a pair of opera glasses from a cold-faced hard-eyed guy next to me and I manage to pick out Knight Errant from the eleven prancing horses leaving the paddock. Mr. Brook's entry looks like a million dollars, tossing its shinny black head, rarin' to go!

I can't sit down, and, for that matter, everybody seems to be standing on their seats, all chattering and laughing kind of nervous and elbowing each other this way and that. I hear a dozen horses' names. "Mad Hatter's a good thing!" . . . "Cirrus will win in a walk!" . . . "Boniface is a cinch at the weights!" . . . "Watch Knight Errant!" . . . Then, thirty thousand voices in one terrible roar which rolls across the field and echoes back: *"They're off!"*

I don't want no more twenty-thousand-dollar bets on no horse races when twenty thousand is all I got to my name. I put on ten years in the two minutes it took 'em to run that handicap! The big crowd has went cuckoo, howling and screaming like thirty thousand maniacs: . . . "Come on with Mad Hatter, *come on with him, Jock!"* "Use your whip, you dumbell!" "Boniface, Boniface, Boniface!" "Cirrus all the way!" "Knight Errant walks in!" "Aaaaah, look at the favorite run!"

I get swept off my perch, and the next thing I know I am halfways down the steps to the field, pulled along by the yelling lunatics. Battling my way, I get to the fence, minus my hat, some buttons off my coat and the flap of a pocket. I hear 'em thundering into the stretch and then I see 'em bunched together on the far rail, a flying, bobbing mass of color. All of a sudden I let out a wild yell of joy. Out in front the jockey's arm rising and falling with the whip like he's beating a drum, is Knight Errant! I know Mr. Brock's color's; red cap, blue jacket with red bars. Knight Errant closed at three to one, not the five to

one I expected, but sixty thousand for me if he wins! If he loses. . .

But you seen it in the papers. Knight Errant stumbled fifty yards from the finish, recovered too late, and run—fifth!

The jam at the rail breaks up quick. Lots of fellows is yelling with joy and running up to cash in their tickets as the numbers goes up, 6-3-1-Cirrus, Boniface, Mad Hatter. Others, like me, just stands there in a trance. It kind of slowly begins to get through my num head that I am clean—I ain't got a nickel in the wide, wide world. And as for Judy—miles away, hundreds of miles!

Then I think to myself: "Well, you big stiff, what are you going to do, bust out crying? Snap out of it! You couldn't get that twenty thousand back if you sobbed your eyes out— you can't get *nothing* if you're going to moan about it. Forget it, and start the ball rolling for another bank roll. It's all fun!"

I'm plowing my ways through the crowd back to Judy, a little bit older, but at least with my head up, when I bump smack into the last guy in the world I expect to see at a race track just then—Rags. He's tearing up some tickets and cursing Mr. Brock and Knight Errant, over and over again. Well, it kind of dumfounds me that Rags would be able to make a bet on anything when he's in a jam like he is now, so I ask him about it. He seems a bit startled to see me, peering at me out of a set of bloodshot eyes which has booze printed on 'em in raised letters.

"Is it any of *your* affair what I do?" he snarls, glaring at me.

"Well, no—I guess it ain't, Rags," I says. "Only I'd think a fellow which is in the trouble *you* are——"

He busts out laughing at the top of his voice and I stop in the greatest of surprise.

"What's the joke?" I says.

Rag's lip curls at me in one of them sneers which would make a rabbit aggressive.

"You're the joke, my poor fool!" he says. "I'm not in *any* trouble—I never stole *anything!* I saw a chance for a clean-up on that infernal nag of Brock's, Knight Errant, if I had a respectable amount of money to bet. So I concocted that embezzlement story for your sole benefit and you fell for it beautifully, you boob! Ten thousand dollars for the mere asking, though you must admit I put on some artistic touches. Well, you owe me something for coming between me and Judy Willcox. As for the ten thousand—try and get it, that's all! You have nothing to show that I owe you a penny, and I have your word of honor that you'll never tell!"

Well, I just stand there and stare into his grinning face. I'm *afraid* to touch him, honest I am, because I know I would never be satisfied with just beating him up! I'd bump him off as sure as my name's Gale Galen, and I didn't want to go to the chair. But somebody pushes in between us and grabs Rags's arm. It's Nate Shapiro and his face is as white as white itself.

"You double-crossin', yellah hound!" he bawls at

Rags. "You bet he's got somethin' to show 'at you owe him 'at jack—he's got *me!* I heard every word you said, d'ye get *that,* you crook? I know Gale—*he'll* never cuff you, but it's different *here!* You're laughin', hey? Well, laugh *this* off!"

With that he knocks Rags flat on his shoulder blades, and then ducks through the crowd which comes running up. I continue on up to the grand stand and Judy.

I guess she knows something is wrong the minute she sees me, though I try to act natural.

"Gale, what's the matter?" she says quickly. "Did you lose on that race?"

I nod my head, it's buzzing like a bee-hive.

"How much?" she wants to know, pulling me around till I face her.

"Oh, just a few dollars," I says, with a synthetic grin.

I should of knew by this time that I can't fool Judy. In a few minutes she draws the entire box score from me, with the slight exception of what Rags has did. I see by her pale face that it's a terrible blow to her to hear I have lost my last dime on this horse race. But instead of bawling me out, a thing I confidently expect, why, she is just full of sympathy, squeezing my arm and telling me never mind I'll soon have it all back and more. Coming at a time when I never needed it worse, her sweetness is more than a tonic and does wonders for my peace of mind. Ain't she a knockout, no fooling?

I sit there just looking at her and I find the view a

thrilling one indeed. I'm doing a piece of heavy thinking—thinking what I could do if she'd *always* be with me, when I hear her saying that I don't have to start penniless, I'll at least have the twelve thousand I'm going to get for my fight with Jimmy Hanley for the light heavyweight title.

Before I get a chance to stall on this subject, along comes Nate, still steamed up about Rags. His first remark, though, is that he win five thousand even on Cirrus, and that Kayo Kelly dropped one thousand on Mad Hatter and is fit to be tied. Then he turns to Judy.

"Did Gale tell you what that—what Rags Dempster done to him?" he demands.

Judy's eyes widens and she says no. I try to shut Nate up, but he tells Judy how Rags took me for that ten thousand bucks and made me like it. Well, she goes right up in flames and says she will go to Rags's father and tell him the whole business and make him pay me. Honest, I never see her so hopping mad before in all my life! But I make her promise to lay off. What good would it do to tell Rags's old man. I got no proof and who's word would his father take? To tell you the truth, I'm more interested in the fact that Judy thinks enough of me to want to go to the bat for me than I am in the ten thousand or ten million!

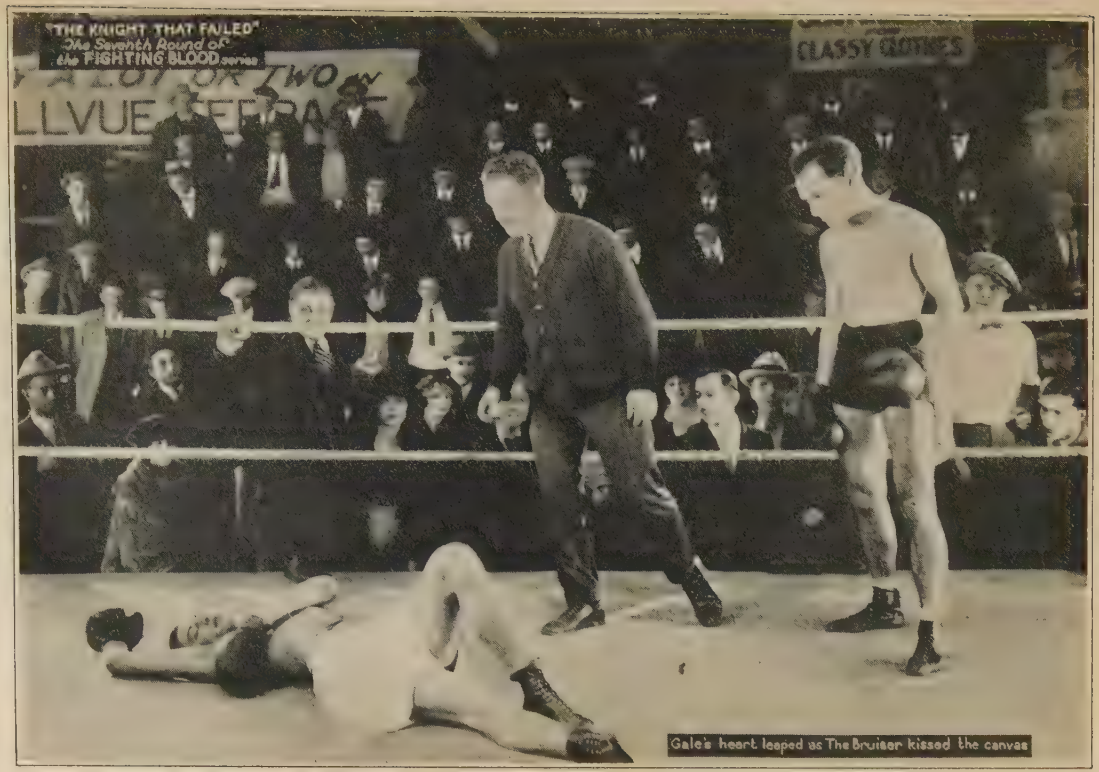
Well, three days later I fight Jimmy Hanley and you know what happened. I never went into a battle more determined to win and win quick! Before the bell rings for the first frame, I got everything to set in my mind. If I lose this scrap, I got to start at the

bottom and begin all over again, broke. The five thousand and up purses will be a thing of the past till I can fight my ways to another chance at the title. If I win it, why, I'm a *champion* and I can write my own ticket for the amounts I get to display my wares. I can even go to Europe and get a crack at Gunner Slade, world's champion light heavy. Yet, I got to win and win quick!

As I had gave Rags Dempster the money I was to get for this scuffle, I am really fighting Hanley for nothing, but I find that more of a help than anything else. Hanley come out smiling at the bell, nodding to friends at the close-packed ringside. He blocks my straight left and counters with a light jab to my mouth. I shake my head and bore in to close quarters and both of us land hard rights and lefts to the body, while the crowd settles back to look at a long, tough fight.

The next second they are all on their feet, triple cuckoo! As we come out of a clinch, we both start a right swing for the other's jaw. I beat Hanley to the punch, connecting solidly, and he went down on his haunches like somebody tripped him. The house is in a uproar as the referee begins the counting and one look at Hanley's goofy, how-did-this-happen grin is enough for me! I know how to work when he gets up—if he does.

He did. He's on his feet at "eight" and the customers howl for me to finish him. I gives him plenty chance to stand erect and then I measure him with a light left and sock my right to his heart. He falls over


"THE KNIGHT THAT FAILED"
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CLASSY CLOTHES
Gale's heart leaped as The bruiser kissed the canvas

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A SCENE FROM THE PHOTOPLAY.

on me and hangs there for his life, gasping for breath.

The referee finally tears him away and Hanley surprises me with a wild left hook to the head which sends me back against the ropes and gives his friends a chance to yell. But that's just a dying flurry. Hanley never got over that first punch which floored him, and I know it's only a question now of a opening! I don't want to cut him up by playing safe and wearing him down, as some guys would of done. I want to slip him a clean knockout—quick, painless, and a proper way for a champ to lose. The way I wanted to get it myself when *my* time came.

The opening comes thirty seconds before the bell and just when Hanley seems to be finding himself and getting stronger. I am covered up and letting him drive me across the ring with a shower of lefts and rights, most of which is bouncing off my bent elbows, but some of which gets through. The ones which *did* connect was not doing me no good and that's a fact! Hanley was a mean puncher, but that knockdown has ruined his timing and generalship. He's snarling at me to open up and fight when I suddenly hook my left to his wind with everything I got behind it.

Hanley grunts, looks worried and backs away, while advice pours from his corner like water over a dam! I follow him slowly to the ropes, stabbing my left in his face to keep him from setting for a punch. A quick feint for his body draws down his guard, and I throw a right at his head which buckles his shaky knees and brings the bawling mob to its feet again. Dizzy and all at sea, Hanley swings a vicious left, and

I step in under it, crossing my right flush to his jaw. This punch should of knocked him cold. It did!

I am light heavyweight champion of America, but I ain't got a dime to my name.

Mr. Brock and Spence is the first ones to greet me when I climb down under the ropes after my one-round win. Mr. Brock grabs my glove and pumps my hand up and down till my arm's sore. Then he tells me Spence has wised him up to what happened to me when Knight Errant stumbled in the stretch. He claims he feels more or less responsible for me going to the cleaners, as his son laid me on the horse, and he wants to make good my twenty thousand out of his own pocket. As if I'd let him!

"But, you poor devil—" begins Mr. Brock, when I says no.

"I ain't no poor devil, Mister Brock, don't call me that!" I says, quietly. "I *hate* that expression! I don't want to be cried over. I'm young and healthy and I got some valuable experience now that I didn't have before. In a way, I'm glad I lost that money. It's cured me forever of gambling, that's a cinch! If I'd of won that bet, I might be hanging around the race tracks till I lost my ambition and a few other things which is more than money. I'll start right in again to-morrow doing my stuff, and——"

"But you haven't a penny!" interrupts Mr. Brock impatiently. "You are just where you started!"

"Oh, no, I'm not just where I started, Mister Brock," I grins, throwing out my chest. "You forget —I'm a champion!"

ROUND EIGHT

CHRISTOPHER OF COLUMBUS

BEING a champion at *anything* is a wonderful sensation, but it goes to your head like bootleg. Success has knocked as many fellows cold as failure ever did, what I mean, because you get careless when you get to the top, and you take chances you would never of thought of when you was just one of the mob. You get to thinking you're unvincible, and a guy which figures himself bombproof in *any* game gives old man Destiny the hystericals! Leading the pack in a race where they's only room for one in front is a exceedingly ticklish position. They's always somebody else coming up with a rush just the way *you* did, and the fatal mistake of holding *that* baby too cheaply usually accounts for the fall of the mighty, in the prize ring or in anything else!

After my win over Jimmy Hanley, I passed through the dangerous stage which all winners has got to pass through sooner or later. Some comes out of it champs and some comes out of it tramps. I come out still a champion, but Judy was responsible for that. Gee, what a sap I made out of myself for a while! They's no telling *what* cuckoo stunts I might of did or where I'd of wound up if Judy hadn't snapped me out of it in

time. But still, as she said, the experience I had was necessary to bring me back to earth. The important money I had been taking in, the kick of seeing my name all over the sporting pages, getting offers from movie companies, having people turn to look after me on the street and acting proud to shake my hand—all that coming almost overnight, you might say, was a bit too much for me! I got no chancce to get used to it.

But just as losing every nickel I had on the first horse race I ever bet on in my life cured me of gambling, so did my first bout with Battling Whisky turn me forever from the cup that queers. I at least had brains enough to realize in time that in both drinking and gambling I was putting in far more than I could ever hope to take out—risking my self-respect, Judy, and my future against this thing they call luck and a drink of whisky!

This particular adventure of mine liked to cost me my brand new title. Judy says it was worth it and I got off cheap. I don't know—here's the dope, what do *you* think?

As I mentioned before, Gunner Slade, light-heavyweight champ of the civilized world, had promised me a fight if I beat Jimmy Hanley. But it was different after the Gunner sees by the cables that I flatten James with a few punches. That one-frame win makes Mr. Slade very thoughtful indeed and he demands a hundred thousand fish—win, lose, or draw—for risking his championship in a scuffle with me. He might as well of asked for the Eyetalian throne! The fight promoters on both sides of the bounding main just giggle

at him, and he goes on about his business, beating up them foreign set-ups and perfectly satisfied with *everything.*

But I ain't satisfied! I want to win the world's championship, box a couple of times for plenty pennies and then step down from the ring—or up—to the business world. That means Judy and Judy means—everything.

So I reversed the usual custom for a champion by hurling challenges at the leading contenders in my division. The sport writers, which had always been nice to me, seems to get quite a kick out of this, and I was on the sporting pages every day as regular as the date line. I got lots of publicity, pleasing to the eye, but not so good as a food!

Well, the time goes on and I don't see no jack in sight. I'm doing about as much business as if I was selling sleighs in Los Angeles, and I'm plenty disgusted. I'm sitting in our office one day talking things over with Judy, when a thought smacks me right in the face. I could of kick myself for not thinking of it before! The purses which the New York promoters was offering me for fights thrills me about as much as it thrills a aviator to go up in a elevator, but this scheme I have suddenly hit on looks like a wow!

In the land of Columbus, Ohio, there was a light heavyweight which from the newspaper reports must be using buzz saws for sparring partners and concrete silos for punching bags. His name in round numbers was Kid Christopher, and he's so tough he rips his clothes to shreds just putting 'em on. Out in far-off

Columbus they thought Kid Christopher was the parrot's beak and a better man than I'll ever be. Yet I'm champion in his class and he's failed to challenge me for a quarrel. All right, *I'll* challenge *him!*

"Judy," I says, "write a letter to Kid Christopher's manager asking him how much wages he wants for his visible means of support to fight me for the light-heavyweight title."

She raises her beautiful eyebrows in surprise. "But the highest bid from the New York promoters was forty thousand dollars—thirty for you and ten for Christopher," says Judy. "And Christopher has refused that amount. I have the correspondence all here, and——"

She starts for the files, but I stop her. "Never mind the letters, Judy," I says. "And never mind the New York promoters. *I'm going to promote this fight myself!*"

Judy looks at me with these eyes which has been goaling the boys since she's been seven years old.

"What do you mean, Gale?" she asks, plenty interested.

"I'll tell you, Judy," I says. "I been thinking matters over, and I have reached the conclusion that I can use a million the same as a fight promoter can! I got just as much brains and twice the ambition as any of them birds, get me? Why should I go in there and get my head beat off for ten or twenty thousand bucks so's some wise guy promoter can draw down a hundred thousand for himself? Why shouldn't the *fighter* get the big money for doing his stuff? Who draws the

crowd? Who does the fighting? The scrapper! Who gets the money? The promoter! Well, I don't need no promoters. I'll stage my next battle *myself and find out for good* and all whether they is anything else I can do besides fight, or am I doomed to be a leather pusher for the rest of my natural life!"

By this time Judy is all excited and the skin I'd love to touch is flushed a rosy red.

"Of course, Gale, I'm delighted to know you want to try *anything* apart from prize fighting," she says. "And maybe if you are successful in promoting this fight, that will be an incentive to you to try promoting bigger things. Just how will you go about it?"

"Well," I says, "first I'll get together with Nate and figure out how much actual cash we'll have to put up for the rent of a arena, Kid Christopher's guarantee, the dough for the preliminary boys, and all that stuff. Then when I get the figures, why, I'll just go out and raise the jack. That's all they is to that!"

Judy smiles. "As easy as that?" she says, kind of doubtful. "I'm not trying to discourage you, Gale, but it seems to me all that will take a lot of money. Where will you get it?"

"Faint heart never won a bank roll!" I grins back at her. "I'll form a pool right here in Drew City among my friends, each one to put in so much, and, after the fight, take down profits according to their investment. They's Mister Brock, Spence, Lem Garfield, Ajariah Stubbs, Knockout Kelly, Nate, Kale Yackley, and plenty more which has got lavish umbrella money hid out for a rainy day. Of course, it's going

to take a lot of arguing and before I raise the first ten grand I'll probably be hoarse—but I'll get it and don't think I won't. I got my heart set on this, Judy, and what I set my heart on I generally get!"

I look right at her when I say that, and I ain't thinking of the *money* I got to raise either. And I guess neither was Judy, because that schoolgirl complexion suddenly turns crimson and she monkeys with the notes on her typewriter desk for a minute.

"Well, Gale, it's certainly an ambitious effort, but I know you'll be equal to it!" she says finally, and shakes my hand. But she pulls hers away when I act like I never want to let go. "I wish you luck," she adds, "and if you don't let me help in some way, I'll—I'll be real angry!"

I stand as close to her as she'll let me and I'm tingling all over—fighting the idea of putting my arms around her, like I always had to fight that idea when I'm near her!

"Judy," I says, "you keep on being nice to me and you'll be helping a lot! That's all *you* got to do—just act as if—as if you liked me, even a little. Whenever I think you do—say, I feel they's *nothing* can stop me! I——"

"Of course I like you, Gale," says Judy, calmly shutting me off, as usual. "Now go and start putting your plans into action while you're enthusiastic about them. That's always the best time!"

And she turns back to her typewriter. A polite "Here's your hat, what's your hurry?" Well, as the French says: *"alpha beta gamma delta!"*

The first snag I hit in my campaign to raise this sugar is no less than Mr. Nathan Shapiro. Before I get halfways through telling Nate about my scheme to personally promote my clash with Christopher of Columbus, why, Nate throws up his hands and hollers that I'm cuckoo. He's all steamed up. They's a million reasons why I shouldn't think of such a thing, he says, yet when I pin him down he can only name *one* reason. That's that I ain't got no experience as a fight promoter.

"Nate," I says, "Noah never had no experience with boats, but he sailed a mean ark! Adam never had no experience at *nothing* and——"

"And he got throwed out of the Garden of Eden on his ear!" butts in Nate. "You go boundin' around tryin' to raise any jack in this slab and 'at's what'll happen to *us!* These yokels is closer than a tie game. They wouldn't give a dime to see Niagara Falls run backward—can you picture 'em givin' you pennies to put into a box fight in New York? Be yourself!"

"I'll bet you five hundred bucks I raise the dough in a week," I says; "money talks!"

"Money may talk in *some* places," sneers Nate, "but you'll find it deaf and dumb here! I won't make no bet with you, though. You're too lucky for *me,* kid. Say—if you fell off a dock, you'd come up with a tube of radium in each hand!"

The next time I see Nate, why I ain't got no tube of radium in each hand, but I got enough money in each hand to buy 'em!

My second interview is with Spence Brock. Spence

thinks my scheme is the gnat's elbow and nothing will do but he's got to run me up to his father with it. Mr. Brock listens to my sales talk, asks a few questions about one thing and the other, chews on his always unlit cigar for a minute, cocks a eye at me—and then starts the ball rolling with a check for twenty-five thousand dollars! Spence comes across with a thousand. When I got outside their house I capered around till should anybody of saw me they would of took it for granted I'm crazy—and I *am* crazy with joy!

Then I begin a house-to-house canvass among the people I know in Drew City. I put everything I got into my selling argument, changing it for almost every person I hit for a contribution, or rather for a investment, as I hope to pay interest which will make the First National Bank's 4 per cent look silly!

I play up to each one's weakness as I know it, show 'em figures on the gate receipts of some carefully selected championship fights, promise I won't take *my* share of the purse till everybody has got their dough back with a handsome profit, and wind up by showing 'em Mr. Brock's name at the head of the list for that twenty-five grand. They couldn't laugh *that* off and it generally sold 'em!

A twenty-minute talk lands Kale Yackley for a five-hundred-buck subscription. My next stop is Ajariah Stubbs. Time put in, one hour ten minutes; result, $2,500. I take Lem Garfield for five hundred; Red Fish has a thousand bucks' worth of faith in me; another grand comes easy from a pool at Nickmeyer's Garage, and that's the way it goes all along the line.

Even Judy and her mother insist on having a interest in the thing, and though I don't want *them* to gamble their money on me, why, they force me to take two hundred.

In three days I have collected a total of forty thousand iron men right in Drew City from people which was willing to back up their belief in me with the greatest proof of friendship they is in the world—money! Believe me, I felt my responsibility and I was proud of it. I couldn't of been such a flop or they'd never take a chance like that on nothing but my word, would they?

Well, when Nate comes back to our office from Buffalo with Knockout Kelly, where Kayo stopped Indian Brown in three rounds, and I tell him what I've done, why, he's speechless. But Nate's never speechless for long! After remarking that if he had *my* nerve he'd open a sailboat factory on the Sara Desert, he says he'll just toss in ten thousand of his own and Kayo will sweeten the pot with five more.

"Well—I—eh—I was goin' to get a car," begins Kayo.

"Blah!" says Nate. "What do *you* know about autos? I bet you think a chassey is lingerie! Put him down for five grand," he adds to me. "I'll send a wire to Kid Christopher's pilot offerin' him fifteen thousand for his end and 'at's all he'll get if he cries his eyes out! Let's sit down now and dope out how much jack we'll need to stage this frolic."

So that's what we done. Allowing fifteen thousand for Kid Christopher's guarantee, three or four thou-

sand more for the preliminary bouts, and around fifty thousand for rent of a arena, timekeepers, ticket sellers, ushers, referees, advertising, etc. and etc., we get a grand total of about $70,000 for expenses, without counting my share of the purse.

As champion, I'm entitled to at least a third of the gross receipts, and I figure with proper publicity the fight will draw almost a $200,000 gate. With expenses and my share totalling, say $130,000, that leaves seventy thousand profit to go to the people which put up the forty thousand in Drew City, or almost two to one for their money. That's, of course, if everything goes O. K.

Nate glances over the list of investors and he suddenly looks up.

"Does Rags Dempster ever crack anything about 'at ten grand he gypped you out of?" he asks.

"I never see him no more, Nate," I says, "and I'm just as tickled."

"Yeah?" snarls Nate. "Well, I'll make him or his old man come through with 'at jack if it's the last thing I do!"

He gets up and grabs his hat. "Wait here," he says, with a odd smile. "You think *you're* good as a collector—well, I'm going over and bear down heavy on old man Dempster, and I bet I can make him see his way clear to investin' ten thousand in our fight!"

Nate's gone before I realize that he's going to try and make Rags Dempster's father pay back the ten thousand his sissy son got away from me.

A hour comes and goes and no sign of Nate. Then

Judy trips into the office, looking kind of puzzled. She says she didn't know that Nate and Rags was so friendly. I ask her what does she mean and she says she has just saw them going into the office of the Dempster Carpet Factory, arm in arm. It's my turn to look puzzled, and that's what I'm doing when Nate busts in, out of breath and grinning like a hyena.

"I'm what you call a collectin' *fool!*" He pants, throwing a pink slip of paper down in front of me. "There's your ten grand—laugh *that* off!"

I snatched up the paper and sure enough it's a check for ten thousand, signed by old man Dempster.

"Do you mean to tell me that Mr. Dempster took your word that his son owed me that money?" I says, in amazement.

"No," says Nate. "He took his son's word for it!"

"What on earth made Rags act decently, for once in his life?" butts in Judy.

"This!" says Nate, reaching back on his hip and throwing a ugly-looking automatic on the desk. Judy gasps and edges away. "I meet this Rags on the street," goes on Nate, "and I tell him if he don't come over to his old man with me and promote 'at ten grand I'll cook him! Rags laughs. Then I move close to him and let him feel the gat in my pocket. When he starts to squawk I says make it snappy, or I'll put a hole in him you could drive a truck through. 'At makes Rags see things in a different light, and we wind up in his old man's office. I speak my piece, and, with the gun at his back through my coat, Rags says I'm tellin' the truth. The old boy's burnt up, but he

give me the jack when I says my next stop is the newspaper office!"

Nate leans back looking highly satisfied with himself and he's entitled to. He done a good job! But Judy seems worried and thinking about something else.

"You *will* be careful, won't you, Gale?" she says to me, suddenly. "Rags will be sure to attempt some —some underhanded reprisal for being made to confess to his father."

"I wisht he would," says Nate, pocketing his gun. "All I want is a excuse which will look good to a jury and I'll rub out 'at clown like you rub out a blot!"

Before I can say anything, a messenger boys comes in with a wire from Kid Christopher's manager accepting our terms for a fifteen-round championship brawl, and that drives Rags out of our heads for the time being. But Rags come back and he come back heavy!

A couple days later Spence Brock tells me he was over to New York and who does he run into but Rags, which it lit up like a electric sign. Spence tries to duck, as he likes this baby and pneumonia the same way, but Rags nails him. During the course of the conversation, which Spence says was all one-sided, it comes out that Rags has been gave the air by his father and is working in New York. He's all swelled up like a jump over his job, which is manager in "Louvers," one of the wildest cabarets on Broadway.

Rags and his dizzy pals used to hang out in this trap, and Spence figures that he got the job on the strength of his acquaintance with the high-stepping

bunch from the college. What Rags really is at Louvers, says Spence, is a decoy. Spence also warns me to look out for Rags, as this sapolio blames me for his father making Drew City out of bounds for him. I thank Spence for the tip-off, but I can't see how Rags can do me any harm. Anyways, as he's finished second every time, we've hooked up, why, my idea is that he's got enough.

But Rags is a glutton for punishment! The very next day Constabule Watson drops in the office and asks me and Nate to step over to Judge Tuckerman's court, as the judge wants to see us about our stock-selling scheme. Somebody has told the judge, says the constabule confidentially, that we are obtaining money under false pretenses. We both know that the "somebody" is Rags, without being told, so me and Nate just looks at each other and follows the constabule over. On the ways we stop and pick up Lem Garfield, now our official lawyer. Lem gets our case moved up and I tell the judge how I'm trying to stage this fight with Kid Christopher myself, how everybody which puts up a dime is protected by a claim on the gate receipts and all their profits has got to come out before I touch a penny. Then I pass up the subscription list to him and the first thing which meets his eye is "John T. Brock, $25,000." He never looked no farther!

"Ah-ptu!" he says, hitting the cuspidor with marvelous aim and speaking to Lem. "Counselor, your clients is discharged. This here seems perfectly legal, open, and above board to me and such is my rulin'. Anything John Brock has got anything to dew with

is suthin' I'd like to git in! Jest put me down for a thousand dollars. Next case!"

So *that* was all settled.

But our troubles ain't over yet. The New York fight promoters gets red-headed over me turning down their offers and trying to promote my own show. The result is that when Nate goes over to look around for a battle ground they is nothing stirring. The Boxing Commission also gives him a pushing around when he applies for a license and for a while it looks like we are up against a stone wall. Then Mr. Brock come to the rescue again. He's got more influence in New York than the Prince of Wales got in Buckingham's Palace and a few words from him in the right places done the trick. We got a license from the commission and the lease of a ball park for the night of the scrap, just twenty-four hours after I went up to his house with Spence and told him what was what!

Well, with all this stuff out of the way, I went into training for Kid Christopher—Knockout Kelly, Two-Punch Jackson, and Tommy O'Ryan helping condition me, as usual. At nights me and Judy studies over publicity plans with the idea of making a record attendance certain. I want to cook up something new—something which has never been done before in connection with a box fight and which will be a added reason for making everybody want to see me and Kid Christopher do our stuff.

Finally I hit on a idea which Judy thinks is the duck's quack. It's just this—I'm going to have a drawing of ticket numbers in the ring immediately be-

fore the main bout. The holder of the lucky ticket will be gave one thousand bucks cash! There's a nifty which will only cost us another grand and which I figure will win us twenty times that much in extra tickets sold. Just think, for a five-buck bleacher seat, or a twenty-five-buck ringside seat, you got a chance to see the fight and go home a thousand fish to the good! The kid's clever, hey?

We got plenty publicity on this, and don't think we didn't. The results is that tickets begin to sell like rain would sell in Hades, and a couple of weeks before the meelee we are all sold out!

Nate and Judy is in New York one day checking up with the ticket stands and I am sitting in our office alone going over my figures, when a delegation calls on me headed by the last guy I ever expected to see again anywheres—Rags Dempster. Trying to get rid of this bird is like trying to get rid of measles! Besides Rags, they's three other guys—pale, hard-faced, and cold-eyed. I can't help thinking how perfect they'd all look wearing green eyeshades and with a deck of cards in their hands—or, maybe, automatics!

Rags looks around the office, evidently for Judy, and that heats me up to begin with. He greets me with a kind of sickly grin. Then he wants to know did Nate give me the ten thousand. I nod my head, watching the other guys carefully, and wondering what's what.

"Well, we're all squared up, then," says Rags. "Would you mind giving me a receipt—eh—say: 'Received of Maurice Dempster ten thousand dollars.' Sort of make it—eh—regular?"

"Your father's check will be plenty receipt when it comes back from the bank," I says. "I won't give you no receipt which says that you have gave me ten thousand dollars. I might be misunderstood!"

"Do you think I would show it to anyone?" says Rags, trying to act indignant.

"You might *lose* it," I says, with a sarcastic grin.

"Oh, come on, Galen, act like a human being," says Rags. "You have no kick coming. If we *have* had a few tilts, why, you've always come out on top, haven't you? Won the fair lady and all that sort of thing!"

"One more mention of the fair lady, Rags," I says, stepping close to him, "and I'll put you on the floor, get me?" I look right at his friends, but they don't crack a word. "They's no use of dragging this conference out, Rags," I go on. "You and me will never be lovers, and we both know it! What d'ye want and who's your friends?"

"They're *your* friends too," says Rags, "or, at least, they want to be. Shake hands with Kansas City Yerks, Doc Neil, and Rudy Bernstein. You've heard of them, of course."

Of course I hadn't. I shook hands warily, and Kansas City Yerks clears his throat.

"You got a big thing in this box fight of yours, kid," he says. "A big thing! You ought to click off a couple of hundred grand, easy. How would you like to do it again in a couple of months?"

"What's the big idea?" I says.

"Listen!" butts in the fellow called Doc Neil, pushing Kansas City aside. "You guys waste too much

time. Here's the big idea—instead of slapping this Kid Christopher for a Turkish milk can, let him stay the limit. Then in a couple of months you and him do your stuff again and this time it can be level. You can cut his throat when you get him in there the second time, for all we care. Think of the gate you'll draw for this second battle, after this chump has held you even once! Now we been to Christopher and his manager and they're business men, get me? Everything's set *there!* Don't be afraid that Kid Christopher will try to sneak one over on you; he ain't got brains enough to double-cross nobody. Well, what d'ye say?"

I got plenty to say, but I held back a bit. I'm thinking which one I'll crash first! "Where do *you* guys come in?" I ask softly.

"There's a laugh!" sneers Bernstein to the others. Then he turns to me, still sneering. "Where d'ye think we come in?" he says. "We make book on the first fight and lay two to one you don't knock Christopher out. You fight a draw—*that's* where we come in!"

"And here's where you go *out*—you petty-larcency crooks!" I says.

Then the fun begin. Rags must of saw it coming, because he's the first one out of the room and I hear him clattering down the stairs as I throw Kansas City Yerks after him. Next come Bernstein and then Doc Neil, the only one I hit. He went for his gun and I knocked him cold while his hand was still en route to his hip pocket. So that was that.

Well, as the day of the fight draws near I put in no

little time trying to get Judy to see me defend my title. She's never saw me work, and the mere thought of watching a prize fight makes her shudder. "Beastly, inhuman, and degrading," is the way *she* sizes up the manly art of assault and battery, and it seems nothing can change her.

"But they's plenty of girls goes to box fights, Judy," I says, "and they seem to get quite a kick out of it too!"

"Everyone to their taste," says Judy scornfully; "and don't say 'theys,' Gale; say *'there are.'* Do you know your grammar is growing more atrocious every day? And you are getting a hard, sophisticated expression in your eyes too." She lays her hand on my arm. "Oh, Gale, it's terrible to have to just sit and watch you being coarsened by this constant contact with your rough associates of the ring. It's horrible! You were so nice and clean and—and delightfully naive when you first came to Drew City. Now——"

"Now, I'm just a roughneck, I suppose?" I cut in, a bit sore.

"You will certainly be one if you remain in your present profession," she says coldly.

"Well," I says, as cold as her, "I don't guess you want to have nothing to do with a roughneck, so I'll take the air!" I blowed out of the office, fit to be tied.

That afternoon was a eventful one for my sparring partners, it was for a fact!

The next day Nate sees I'm brooding over something, and being too wise to ask questions he just says to knock off training for the day and we'll go to a show

in New York, as he don't want me too fine for Kid Christopher. So we go to a musical comedy called "The Girl from Mars." It is more girls than Mars and none of 'em is dressed for a trip to the North Pole, that's a cinch. During the intermission along comes the press agent. He tells Nate that after the show he wants us to come back on the stage and have me pose for a picture with the chorus. He claims this will be a great publicity stunt both for me and the show. I took another look at this half-dressed chorus and I says that's out, but Nate says it's all fun and shuts me up, telling the press agent we'll be there with bells on.

It will be a long time before I forget this novel experience. In the first place, the twenty minutes I stand back there on that stage with about thirty girls crowded around me, none of 'em wearing no more than Eve is supposed to of wore and all of 'em kidding me, is the longest twenty minutes I ever put in in my life! My face is so red the reflection must of lit up the whole theatre, and when the fellow gets done taking the pictures I run right out the stage entrance into the street. In the second place, Judy sees the picture in a New York paper a few days later and gives me no chance to explain. She figures I need *that* kind of publicity the same way I need another ear, and from then on she only speaks to me when she has to. That's seldom.

According to my contract with Kid Christopher, we both got to finish our training in New York, so a week before the brawl I go over to Lefty Mullen's gym. Nate makes a deal with Lefty and for a charge of twenty-five cents the public at large is allowed the

boon of coming to see me work out. Kid Christopher has his camp at Red Oliver's on Forty-seventh Street.

Well, among the daily visitors to my matinees is a girl from this musical comedy called Roma Romaine. When I had that simple picture took, she was next to me on one side, and I remember she put her arm around my neck and that was just one of the many things which gets me embarrassed. Anyways, although Roma is a blonde which would win first, second, and third prize in a beauty contest anywheres, why, I'm blonde-proof and this stuff of her hanging around the camp is applesauce to me. In my opinion, the female race is divided into two classes—Judy Willcox and girls! So I don't give Roma a tumble when she comes around to see me train.

Then she commences to phone me at the hotel we're stopping at, can you imagine that? This gets me very much annoyed and it gets Nate suspicious. Nate thinks Roma has been hired by them gamblers which wanted me to fake my fight with Kid Christopher and the whole thing is a plot to get me in some kind of a jam so's I won't be right for the bout. But I laugh at Nate and tell him that stuff only happens in books. If I had only knew what was really going to happen, I would of finished my training in Egypt!

This goofy press agent for "The Girl from Mars" comes around again to see me and Nate one day, and he's all excited. He claims he has cooked up another publicity stunt which will get me and his show columns in the newspapers free of charge. He wants me to stand for a story that me and this Roma is engaged!

We don't have to *get* engaged, though we can for all he cares, but just faking it will get the results, he says. Roma is willing, how about me? I let forth a whinny of rage and I tell him that if he ever puts anything like that in the paper about me, why, he had better be in Africa when the paper comes out!

The day before I fight Kid Christopher I nearly faint when I pick up the New York "Whirl" and see a picture of me and Roma Romaine on the front page. She is wearing a bewitching smile and some beads, and she's got her arm around my neck. I am practically dumfounded, as I never had no pictures took with her alone. Looking closer, I see that this photo has been cut out of the big picture with me surrounded by the chorus of "The Girl from Mars." But that ain't all. Underneath it says:

LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP
DENIES KNOCKOUT BY CUPID

Not Engaged to Roma Romaine of
"Girl from Mars," But—!
Says Six-Second Smith

Well, the day of the big battle I get the final blow which goals me. It's a short letter from Judy congratulating me on my "conquests in New York!" and giving two weeks' notice that she's leaving her job as our stenographer. They's eighty-five dollars' worth of ice on each word, and it's signed "Judith Willcox," instead of the usual "Judy." I'm what you call panic-

stricken, no fooling, because if I lost Judy it would of set me back ten years in my battle to be a success and made the next ten twice as hard!

I grab up the phone and manage to get her at our office in Drew City by dumb luck. The minute her thrilling voice comes over the wire, I beg her to wait till I have knocked Kid Christopher dead and I will fully explain all that stuff in the papers about me and Roma Romaine. Her answer is to hang up the receiver!

That is one fearful day for me, I'll tell the world! Nate is busy looking after the arrangements at the arena, Spence is in Drew City, and Knockout Kelly is down at Brighton Beach with Mary Ballinger. So I got nobody to tell my troubles to and nowheres to look for sympathy except in the dictionary. I got till ten o'clock that night to step into the ring with Kid Christopher, and I duck the training camp early in the afternoon, wandering around New York like a lost Airedale.

Along around six o'clock I am standing in the usual jam at Forty-second Street and Broadway when somebody taps me on the arm. I turn around, tickled silly to meet *anybody* I know, and I gaze into the sparkling eyes of Roma Romaine.

"Snap out of it—you look as if you had just lost your best friend!" she smiles, shaking my arm.

"You're a wonderful guesser," I says gloomily, thinking of Judy. "That's just what I *have* done!"

Lots of guys passing turns for another flash at her. She was easy to look at and no mistake. But, Judy ——!

"I was just going to get something to eat," I continued, for want of something to say, "Would you wish to come with me?"

"What could be sweeter?" says Roma, hooking her arm in mine. "Let's go!"

After I asked her I'm sorry I did, in a way, but my main idea in taking her to supper is to talk to her. She's a girl—maybe she can wise me up on what to do to square things with Judy. I ask Roma where does she want to eat, and she picks out Louvers and I'm in this trap and sitting at a table with her before I remember it's where Rags Dempster is working. I know if he sees me there with a girl, he won't be able to tell Judy fast enough. In those days I was very fluent at getting out of the frying pan into the fire!

Well, that was the first time I had ever been in a cabaret in my life and unless I am drugged and dragged in it will be my last! The place is crowded to the doors and they's a good hundred dancing. The jazz music, the dancers, the revue which is mostly girls with less on than the costumes of Roma's show, the French dishes, the famine prices on the bill of fare, dozens of sporting men I don't know recognizing me and coming over to our table to wish me luck that night in my scuffle with Kid Christopher—all this stuff commences to go to my head. Looking around this weird place, hardly listening to Roma's chatter, I get a awful kick out of the beautiful women, the soft lights, the guys in dress suits, and this and that, but still I have a feeling that this would be a good place for me to get away from and *stay* away from!

Roma gets a bit steamed up over the fact that I am not paying her enough attention, and when I call her "Judy" a couple of times by mistake she goes right up in a blaze. She says she could be sitting there with a millionaire instead of me if she wanted to, and while I feel like telling her I will trade seats with the first millionaire she sees, why, I manage to cool her off. She don't have to go on the stage till half past nine so she's taking her time with her dinner, but I gulp everything down because what I crave to do is leave!

Then who comes along but Rags Dempster, loaded to the guards. His first remark is to glance at his own Tuxedo and tell me that he's got a good mind to put me out, because everybody is supposed to wear evening clothes in Louvers at night. I pay no attention to him till he starts to kid Roma. Then I get up and quietly take him by the lapel of his coat. I says if he is at our table by the time I sit down I will get up again and throw him through the big plate-glass window which looks out on Broadway. Rags moves along.

After a while Roma says let's have a drink. I says I don't drink, and I don't know no place to get it. This makes Roma laugh out loud, and she calls over the waiter, ordering a highball as open and above board as if Prohibition was April Fool. She says she won't drink alone, so I tell the grinning waiter to bring me a plain ginger ale. He brung the ginger ale along in a mug instead of a glass, and after I have a couple of 'em I'm satisfied it's the best ginger ale I ever tasted. I ask the waiter what brand it is, and the waiter grins heavy.

"'At's the real McCoy you got there, brother," he says. "Comes right down from Canada!"

"I thought it must be imported ginger ale," I says. "Let's have some more!"

Well, I have plenty drinks of this Canadian ginger ale, and I commence to feel better every minute. My troubles and worries has dropped away like magic and to tell you the truth I never forgot that in a few hours I am going to step into a ring and defend my title. I am having lots of fun and I feel like dancing, which is funny, when you take into consideration that I can't dance a stroke and never could or wanted to till that night.

I have no more than got out of my chair, when somebody grabs my arm and flops me back into it. It's Nate, and his face is as white as a sheet.

"You big stiff!" he says to me, "Have you went cuckoo? D'ye know they's twenty-five thousand people out there at the ball park waiting to see you fight Kid Christopher in less'n three hours?"

"Who's Kid Chris-Christopher?" I grins, and I'm kind of dizzy in my nut. Roma has slipped away into the crowd somewheres.

"Holy mackerel," whispers Nate, "you're lit up like a church! D'ye think you can get it through your skull 'at Rags Dempster and this Jane has framed you? They got you soused so's you either can't show up to fight Kid Christopher, or you'll be a mark for him if you do. You have tossed away your title and throwed down your friends by *this* night's work, fellah!"

I don't seem to be able to get what he's talking about

"Blah!" I says. "I can lick Kid Chris-s-opher with ——"

"If you can lick Christopher to-night, then I can lick that Rocky Mountains!" snarls Nate. "What will Mister Brock and Miss Willcox and all them guys in Drew City think of you now? You'll be about *through* there, after to-night!"

"Nate," I says, "I'm awful sleepy! . . ."

The next thing I remember I am back of Ajariah Stubbs's soda fountain, and Judy is sitting at the counter with Rags. I hit Rags with the ice pick and Constabule Watson rushes in to arrest me. We struggle all over the place and then . . . I open my eyes and there's Nate, scuffling around a room with me. From down below comes the familiar music of a jazz band and the sounds of clinking glasses and chatter. But the miracle is over in the corner of the room, watching me with wide-open eyes which shows signs of heavy weeping—Judy!

"What—how—" I begins, kind of dazed.

"Shut up and listen to *me!*" snaps Nate, clapping a hat on my head. "I got a taxi comin' here, and you got forty-five minutes to get into the ring with Kid Christopher. You got a bun on downstairs, and I couldn't do nothin' with you. We tried to get you to go to bed and you put four waiters on the floor! So I took a long chance and sent for Miss Willcox. Spence Brock rushed her up here a hour ago in his racin' car, and he's at the police station now, squarin' a pinch for speedin'. When Miss Willcox got here she talked you into bein' yourself, and after I give you

a dozen cold showers she made you lay down. You've had about a hour's sleep. Boy, if you ever forget this girl for what she done for you to-night, you and me is through for life! C'mon, now, let's go!"

I choke and try to thank Judy, but she turns away from me and walks out the door. Gee, I felt rotten—terrible! I'd made a disgrace of myself before Judy, took a chance with the money of my friends in Drew City which trusted me, and showed a weakness which I'd be the first to sneer at in the next guy. Right then and there I made myself certain promises regarding booze, and I have kept them promises to this day. All the ways to the ball park I can only think of Judy's hurt face and wet eyes. Well, I'll never do nothing to make her cry again, so help me!

The mob is dying with impatience, and they set up a cheer which shook the stars when I climb through the ropes that night, a half hour late. I am far from clear-headed, but I'm in there to put up the battle of my life —win or lose! Kid Christopher is a tough looking baby with "I can take it!" wrote all over him. I watch him with about the same kind of feelings Abel must of had while waiting for Cain to leave his corner. I am just aquiver with nerves, but the papers says after the fight I was "cool, calm, and workmanlike" from the minute I entered the ring.

Kid Christopher has evidently been tipped about the shape I'm in, because he goes right after my body, leaving my jaw for future reference. He could hit, too, don't think he couldn't! He pounds me heavy in the first round, and I don't seem able to keep him away.

His best punch is a left hook to the stomach, and at the end of round one my stomach is a raw red and pumping like a bellows. The papers says I only landed one clean blow in that frame—a stiff right swing to the head before the bell. I don't even remember that one, but I remember the customers razzed me and holler for me to fight when I run to my corner and Nate emptied the water bucket on me.

I took plenty of punishment in the second round, my first dose of booze having ruined my timing and generalship. Getting more confidence every minute, Kid Christopher shifts his attack to my head, and a sizzling straight left opens a old cut over one of my eyes, drenching me with gore. Then Christopher sails into me in earnest, ripping both hands to the wind but my mind's beginning to clear and I drove him to a clinch with two torrid rights to the jaw which brought the mob to its feet, howling. While we're clinched, Christopher whispers to me that my trunks is slipping off. A old trick, but I fell for it! I drop my hands to my belt mechanically, and quick as a flash Christopher uppercut me with his right and I hit the mat with a thud.

I watched the referee's rising and falling arm, not being able to hear the count over the roar of the crowd, and at "eight" I got up and back-pedalled till my dizzy head cleared. Then Christopher caught me flush on the mouth with a right hook, and I turn my head to drop a tooth which is of no further value to me. He hit me pretty low twice in this round, and Nate bellered "Foul!" But the referee warns Nate to keep

quiet and says nothing at all to Kid Christopher. The gong finds us in a clinch, with Christopher, one arm free, punishing me about the body. He's a good boy, this Christopher, and I'd liked to of fought him again.

"Come on and fight, you cake eater!" snarls Kid Christopher, coming out for the third round with visions of the light-heavyweight title clouding his judgment. I spun him halfways around with a right to the heart and stung him with lefts and rights to the head till he's glad to clinch. On the break, Christopher plants a hard left to my body, and I counter with another right to the heart which hurt. I seen it in his face.

Then he begins a rally and we stand toe to toe and slug till outside the ring is a maniac's convention! The blood from the cut over my eye bothers me considerably. Although Nate had sewed it up between the second and third round, Christopher opens it again during this slugfest in mid-ring.

At the bell I am getting up from a clean knockdown without waiting for the count. I'm so groggy I start for Christopher's corner by mistake and the crowd roars when the referee has to steer me to my own. Unless I got a lucky break, it looked like my brand-new title was going to change hands right in that ring!

The break come between the third and fourth rounds when Nate, desperately sponging me off while Kayo Kelly holds the ammonia under my nose, tells me that *Judy is out in front!* I sit up so straight I knock the ammonia bottle out of Kayo Kelly's hand. I thought Judy had went right back to Drew City when I left Louvers for the ring, and here she's *watching* me—

watching me take a proper pasting in the first fight she's ever saw me in, and, for all I know, the last fight she'll ever go to again! Well, I guess that was what I needed—something like that to sweep the last remaining cobwebs from my brain, snap me into it, and make me realize that no matter what had happened I'm still a champion!

I come out for round four, loaded for bear. Christopher neatly blocks a wicked left hook to the jaw and stung me with a right to the nose. A right swing sends him into a clinch, but I push him off, measure him with a left to the mouth, and as he danced away under instructions from his corner, I sunk a right in his midsection which didn't do him a bit of good. He then tried hooking his right, but I beat him to the punch with a perfectly timed swing which dropped him on his haunches in his own corner. He leaned on one elbow and gazed goofily at the yelling crowd till the referee reached "nine." Then he got up, shaky and all at sea.

I left his left lead go over my shoulder, stepped in close, and hooked my right flush to his jaw with everything I had in stock behind the punch. "That's the business!" I hear Nate howl as Kid Christopher crashes to the canvas, face down. His legs twitches a couple of times before he straightens out flat, and he never moved again till he was counted out and I help carry him to his corner.

Nate and me fought our ways through the cheering crowd to the main box office, where Spence has come around with Judy. She's a little pale, but her eyes is

like a couple of sapphires, only with more sparkle, and a deeper blue.

"Are you hurt, Gale?" she says anxiously, laying her little hand on my arm.

"No," I says. "That was just a work-out! Listen —even a murderer gets a trial, Judy. Will you let me take you home and explain matters?"

"We can pay them people in Drew City a good two to one for their money," says Nate, looking up from the box-office figures, "and still have a bank roll left which no greyhound in the world could jump over!"

"Oh, I'm *so* glad, Gale," says Judy. "I knew you'd make good! And you fought such a splendid, courageous, uphill fight against that beast! I——"

"Kid Christopher ain't no beast, Judy," I says. "He's a stiff puncher and a nice fellow, but to-night wasn't his night. Maybe it ain't *my* night either! Judy, if you give me the air, I'm going to leave Drew City and——"

"I think we had better get started," butts in Judy—and when she blushes she'd drive you crazy. "It'll take us an hour to drive there, you know."

"It'll take us two hours to-night, Judy," I says. "I got a lot to say."

It took us *four* hours!

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ROUND NINE

A GRIM FAIRY TALE

"UNEASY lies the head that wears a crown!" says Shakespeare to whom it may concern, and that's a remark which could of been written around *me!* As king of the light-heavyweight box fighters, I only wore a crown a brief while, still in that time I had some adventures which convinces me that kings, like the girl in the song, is more to be pitied than scorned.

The success I had in personally conducting that scuffle with Kid Christopher,—both financially and fisticuffily—sells me the idea that I'm the Indian's feathers as a fight promoter, and I can see no good reason why I shouldn't keep on developing my brains by planning and staging my own fights, instead of letting some outsider do it and walk away with the bulk of the gate. I take the cuffing, why shouldn't I take the doubloons, too? Is the way I looked at it. So my next step is to pester Gunner Slade, world's light-heavyweight champion, for a bout. His nightmarish demands for purses is still making the promoters laugh him off, so now I cable him a guarantee of one hundred thousand dollars, win, lose, or draw, if he'll come over and take his pasting like a gentleman and a scholar. This leaves the Gunner bankrupt of

alibis and his manager peevishly shoots back a acceptance, collect.

Well, the first organized protest I bump into after lining up Gunner Slade is Judy. While Judy saw me reduce Kid Christopher to kindling, she also saw the Kid punch me from pillar to post and I took some cruel and unusual punishment before I snapped out of it and flattened him. As a result, Judy says there is nothing in the world could get her to see a prize fight again. We are sitting in our office when the cable from Gunner Slade's manager arrives, and while it fills me with joy it don't seem to thrill Judy no more than it would thrill a letter carrier to take a long walk on his day off. In fact, she seems sore about it.

"You promised me—and yourself—you would give up fighting when you became a champion," she says, plenty reproachful. "And here you are still planning matches. Doesn't your word mean anything, Gale?"

This makes me the bit uncomfortable. It certainly ain't *my* play to do anything which will make this wonderful girl off me. All I had then was her friendship, which wasn't one-tenth of what I'd like to of had. Still, should I ever of lost even that, why, I'd been a living ruin, no fooling! So I step over to her desk, trying to keep my mind on the matter at hand and not on what a beautiful object to look at she *is*!

"Judy," I says, "I *did* promise you I'd quit the ring and I promised myself, too! That ain't a promise so easy to keep, because, Judy—I *like* boxing! No matter if I *have* firmly resolved to get out of the game—a

resolution I'm not going to break—I can't help getting a kick out of a fair and square two-handed fight—it must be in my blood!"

"Oh, Gale," sighs Judy, shaking her head. "I knew it—I felt it! The false glamor of that beastly profession has fascinated you—gripped you like some horrid drug!——"

"Wait a minute, Judy," I cut in. "I'm going to keep my promise and check out of the ring, on that you can gamble. But I set a certain goal for myself in this man's game and I ain't reached it yet. Would you want me to be a quitter, Judy?"

"Gale," smiles Judy, "I cannot imagine the word 'quit' in connection with you—whether the cause be good or bad, once started you'll go through to the finish! But I do not follow your argument. You're champion *now* and what is there in *anything* higher than champion?"

"I'm only American champ, not champion of the world—and that's the mark I'm shooting at!" I says. "To write that title after my name I've got to stop Gunner Slade, and now that he's made up his mind to sail from dear old England, all I can say is that he's coming a long ways to get knocked stiff! Another thing, I'm promoting this fight myself, and look at the experience that will give me for future use in looking after business details. Didn't I show the civilized world I could do something else besides box by the way I put on my scrap with Kid Christopher?"

"Indeed you did, Gale, and made us all proud of you!" says Judy. "But that simply proves my con-

tention that you would be equally successful in promoting some other bigger—and cleaner business."

"Judy," I says, "what business do I know anything about?"

That question's a horse from another race track and it slows her up for a instant. But then she's one more person which don't give up easy.

"Oh you'd find *something,* if you really tried," she says. "You didn't know anything about the boxing business until you went into it, did you?"

"No, I didn't," I admit. "But I was born with a little natural talent for it in the shape of shoulders and hands and the ability to take a cuffing without running crying to my parents. That wouldn't do me no good in the busy marts of trade, Judy—the first banker or merchant prince I smacked, for instance, would have me pinched. Let's let it go this way—if Gunner Slade puts me out I'll call it a day and step down from the ring right after that battle, because if I can't take this fellow I'll have no kick coming. I'll have had the big chance and failed to deliver. Unless I go broke promoting the fight, I'll have quite a few dimes left and I'll go into conference with you so we can pick a business for me to plung right into, letting the box-fight game run for the end book! But let me have this crack at the world's title, Judy. I've gone too far in the game to quit before I've had my try at the *big* prize. D'ye know I sit for almost a hour last night looking at Gunner Slade's picture in 'The Police Gazette'? I'm in a trance, no fooling! D'ye think it was the Gunner's battle-scarred face which hypnotized

me? No! It was what it says under his picture—'Champion of the World!' Judy, with that as my signature I could die happy. Champion of the world at boxing, brick-laying, street digging, *anything,* but—*champion!*"

Judy just sits there staring at me with her lips parted, them heart-stimulating eyes the bit misty and a kind of far-away and long-ago expression in 'em. I gaze at her and do a piece of wishing which would make Aladdin's requests look like the lamp was wasted on him. I get a grip on myself quick, you can bet, because I'm afraid another minute of this pause and I'll be kissing her sure and she'll toss me right out of her sweet young life! I figure she's weakening on the boxing argument, however, so I change the subject with break-your-neck speed.

"Well, I'm certainly a sap for the ages, Judy," I says suddenly. "I got a *real* surprise for you and I come near walking out without saying a word about it! Speaking of going in business, as people will, me and Nate and Kayo Kelly has *already* took a flyer in something apart from the ring. Laugh that off!"

She comes back to Mother Earth with a start and claps her hands together, plenty excited. "Splendid!" she says. "What is it, Gale?"

"We've pooled fifty thousand cash between us," I explain. "And we're going to buy a lot here in Drew City. Right on top of that lot we're going to throw together a little small office building with a moving-picture theatre downstairs. That gives us a ace in the hole should anything happen to any one or all of us in

the science we're in now. So, as a matter of fact, I'll be 50 per cent business man and 50 per cent box fighter, till the time comes when I'm 100 per cent business man and only go to a fight club as a witness."

"Which I hope will be soon!" says Judy, now all smiles again. "I certainly think it's wonderful that you've actually gone into business, Gale, even if you're only going to devote part of your time to it. I'll wager you'll soon get so interested in making your new venture a success that you'll give up boxing without a qualm. This is the best news I've heard in many a day. Congratulations and the best of luck to you!"

"Much obliged, Judy," I says. "And now I wonder if you'd do me a favor?"

"I'll do anything for you that I can, Gale," she tells me. "You *know* that."

"Well," I says, "when we get our movie theatre all set, would you mind—eh—would you mind christening it for us for good luck?"

"Why, I'll be delighted!" she tells me—and looks it. "Let's think up a real attractive name—one that will be striking and descriptive of the theatre, too. Let's see, your theatre should be a delight to the eye, physically, and a delight to the soul, spiritually. Now I wonder just what name would describe that?"

"I got the name which fits that description like the skin fits a olive," I says. "We'll call the theatre 'The Judith'!"

Judy gasps and her face gets redder than a rose, only it looks much prettier.

"Oh, Gale," she stammers, "I—why—you can't call it *that*—You're joking—I——"

"I ain't joking," I says, firmly, "and that's what we're going to call it. I don't see why you should holler about me naming my theatre after you, if you really like me as a friend—or maybe that's the bunk?"

"I *do* like you, Gale," says Judy, "but naming your theatre The Judith would be too—obvious. Drew City is small and narrow in many ways, Gale, and people would misunderstand. There'd be talking that would embarrass both of us—linking our names, you know, and——"

"If you think any talk linking our names would embarrass *me,* Judy," I butt in, "you're muchly mistaken. It would tickle me so silly, I'd put the gossips on my payroll! Say—if our names was only——"

I see the crimson flooding her face again and there's a light in her eye which I don't know for sure is pleasure or rage. Not knowing for sure, I beat it.

Well, for the next three or four weeks I'm busier than a armless sailor furling a sail in a storm. Putting through the deal for our lot and arranging the details of my fight with Gunner Slade certainly keeps me from yawning myself to death and that's a fact. Then one day I'm passing the Dempster & Company carpet factory and I get the shock of my young life when I see Rags coming out of his father's office. As his old man had chased him out of town I was naturally the bit surprised to see him back in Drew City again.

"Hello, Galen," he calls out, like we was old pals. "How's Judy?"

I don't give him a tumble, but just keep on walking, though him merely mentioning Judy gets me redheaded. Still, Rags is determined to get a rise out of me. I guess he figured he was pretty safe on the main street in broad daylight, with pedestrians conspicuous by their presence. So he stands on the steps of the office and sneers.

"Afraid to answer, eh? That's right, you'd better keep your place. We'll see whether or not this town will stand for a drunken pugilist running a theatre here!"

Wam—I'm fit to be tied! I suppose I should of smacked him down then and there and be done with it, but you want to remember that fighting is my *business* and it ain't Rags's by no means. In other words, I can step and he can't so to my mind clouting him would be about as brave a stunt for me as removing a lolly-pop from a young infant. But I can't get over him being back in Drew City and I'm bothered about him knowing I'm going to open this theatre, so I walk away, wondering how in the Kansas City did he ever find *that* out? A few days later I got the dope on that part of it and it hit me like a smack on the chin!

During the week I hear that Rags's old man has gave him another chance and took him back to work in the office of his carpet factory. Immediately, his old gang forgives and forgets, too, because you know yourself a million dollars will get attention anywheres no matter where you roam and a million is what Rags's father is supposed to have. I seen Rags a couple of times more and once he actually tries to make

"friends" with me. You know what I told him. He also calls Judy up either eighteen or twenty-seven times, but I'm glad to state that Rags could of got the wrong number as far as he was concerned.

Well, with Rags bounding around in Drew City I know it won't be long before he'll start after my scalp again—and it wasn't long! His first number was to ruin me at the Drew City Country Club, where I had the chance of a lifetime to step out with the class of the town, assisted by Spence Brock. That's a thing I was crazy to do, as the farther away I could get from the atmosphere of the prize ring when I wasn't actually in it and the higher I could climb on the social ladder in Drew City, the more chance I had of rubbing off the rough edges which I knew would *have* to be rubbed off if I was going to get anywheres. Anyways, Spence had been after me for a long while to come out to the country club with him and try my hand at this golf thing. I'd been putting the event off, because I always thought that in order to properly appreciate the mysteries of cross-country billiards you had to be sixty, a bank president, bald-headed, fat, and a little bit goofy.

However, I would do anything for Spence, so one day we gaily set forth for the courts, or links, or grid-iron, or whatever it is you smack them little white pills around on. When we get out to the country club right off the reel we run into Rags. He's out on what you call the first tea, practicing shots. The minute he sees me, he ties in.

"What's the big idea?" he says to Spence, pointing

to me with his club like I'm something the cat dragged in. I commence to get steamed myself.

"The idea is that Galen and myself are about to play a round of golf," says Spence coldly. "Any objections?"

Rags gives a whinny of rage. "I should say I have an objection!" he snaps, his piggy little eyes glaring at me, though he speaks to Spence. "I shall see that the house committee is immediately notified of this fellow's presence here. This is a gentleman's club, not a training camp for prize fighters!"

Before Spence can play a card. I climbed into the breech.

"Be yourself, you false alarm!" I says, stepping over to Rags and returning his glare with usurious interest. "Just because I been letting you push me around all this time without giving you a smacking, don't get the idea that things is going on this way forever. Some day I *will* take a wallop at you and everything I owe you for all you've ever did to me will be in that one punch!"

"And—eh—he's light-heavyweight champion, Rags," remarks Spence, with a grin.

Rags looks thoughtful indeed and moves away, growling under his breath like all hounds does.

Well, me and Spence ties into this golf. Spence puts his ball on the tea, takes a couple of practice swings, and then—blam! He hits what would of been at least *one* home run in any ball park in the world. I'm up next. I don't want to show off or nothing like that, but as I step up to the tea I can't help think-

ing to myself that what I'll do to this little pock-marked apple will be murderous. I took aim at a tree about a mile away, set myself, and—flooey. I don't even get a foul! Once again I try my luck and miss from here to Madrid. Spence laughs. Different here! Well, to make a long game short, on the eighth swing I finally connected with everything I got and the ball rolled about four feet from the tea. Then I got interested!

A half hour later I am playing this game like not only my life, but the future of the world depended on each stroke. And, listen—golf is considerable pastime, don't think it ain't. Anybody which calls it a old man's game is dizzy! It's a wow of a sport and wonderful as a training stunt for a boxer. Besides great exercise, if you put your heart and soul in it you'll get back cool-headedness, patience, steady nerves, and determination, just what you need to get to the top in the fight game—or in *any* game, for that matter!

When we come to what they call the fourth hole I have run up the praiseworthy score of twenty-five strokes for the first three, while the best Spence can do is fourteen strokes and he's been playing the game for years. However, I'm first to bat at cavity number four and by dumb luck I cracked the pill on the nose with my first swing. As I look up to see have I hit safe or not, I notice Rags down near the flag watching me. I ain't bothered about Rags, though, I'm thinking what a swell time I'm going to have capering around this course every day, mixing with the blue

bloods of Drew City and calling millionaires by nicknames. I'm even going to buy the golfing uniform and a container full of clubs and some caddies to put the tea in. Oh, I'm in right, what I mean, when out of the clear sky Rags winds up my happy little dream.

The ball I hit sails through the air at a bad angle and heads for the State road which runs past the course. There's a swell limousine buzzing along the road and me and Spence holds our breath for fear my ball will hit it. Rags is watching it, too. But my ball drops in a bunker hill this side of the road and I'm just letting go a sigh of honest relief when I see Rags stoop down, pick something up off the ground at his feet and pitch it at that limousine, breaking one of the windows! Then he takes it on the run as the car grinds to a stop.

I come running up to the road for my ball with my club in my hand and I'm looking for the pellet when the bozo from the limousine reaches me. He's fat and bald-headed and his face is as red as a throwing tomato. Honest, he's so mad he ain't fit to be at large! He's got a golf ball in his hand and he holds it up, waving it at the broken window of his limousine. The next point of interest he shows me with his quivering finger is a lump as big as Manhattan on the side of his noble forehead. I bet if he'd had a gun he'd of cooked me sure!

This is a situation which calls for some fast and spellbinding talking, yet what mind I got with me is occupied in realizing what Rags has just did and awarding him the china sledge hammer for brain

work. This baby seen me hit that ball of the course and he immediately hurls his own ball through the limousine window, thus making it look like I drove it through! And now here I am with my club in my hand looking for the ball and nobody else in sight. Rags has gone away from there and Spence is far back at the tea, not knowing what it's all about.

Well, I'd have to be more of a dumbell than I am not to see at a glance that the real story of this accident would sound so silly to the enraged victim that he'd probably take my club away from me and brain me! I wouldn't even believe my own story myself. I'm covered from head to foot with circumstantial evidence and that's all there is to it. So without mentioning Rags at all I merely commence to stutter a apology, when the old jazzbo shuts me off kind of angrily. Then comes the toughest blow of all. This guy is chairman of the house committee, and when he finds out I ain't even a member of the country club he rules me off his golf court for life. In fact, he says if he ever catches me scampering around the greens again he'll have me hung for trespassing!

I think if I had come across Rags when me and Spence is wending our ways home from the country club that day I would of made him the plot of a coroner's inquest and that's a fact! I even took a long cut home so's not to run into him, as a murder wouldn't fit into my program right then by no means. But after I have talked to Nate Shapiro that night I wanted to go out looking for Rags and I ain't even got one qualm left about manslaughter.

My two business partners, Nate and Knockout Kelly, is sitting gloomily in the parlor when I come in. "Ah, the master mind has arrived!" says Nate, sarcastically. "Well, I got one for you to try on your piano—the deal for the lot has fell through and our movie theatre is canceled!"

"Laugh *that* off!" adds Kayo Kelly.

"Boys," I says, "I am in no mood for horseplay—get me? I have just got a tough break and if you start a kidding bee with me I'll lay you both like a carpet!"

"You *think* you just got a tough break," says Nate grimly. "But you're mistaken. We got the tough break right here for you. Listen—I go up to 'at real-estate agent with the jack to take over our lot to-day and they's nothin' stirrin'! No can do. Somebody's put in a rap for us and the owner ain't goin' through with the sale!"

"Why?" I asks, mystified to death.

"'At's what I asked the agent," says Nate. "And this tomato tells me the owner didn't know he was doin' business with a combination of box fighters, and now that he does, why, he don't think me and you and Kayo here should be encouraged to *stay* in Drew City, much less open a business in this slab. Can you tie that?"

"I went right up in flames!" says Knockout Kelly. And I can imagine he did.

"Well, Kayo," I says, "I hope you kept your head and didn't begin swearing and cursing in that agent's office, because that's just the thing would make

it harder for me to straighten this out. We don't want 'em to think we're rough and tough, even if we *are* boxers. A gentlemanly answer would of probably swung the tide in our favor."

"Everything's O. K. then," grins Kayo. "I didn't do a particle of swearin' or cussin'—by a odd coincidence, I simply stepped in and knocked that wisecrackin' agent for a horse radish!"

I just throwed up my hands and sunk in a chair. "Who is this owner?" I says finally. "Maybe I can make him see things in a different light."

"Sure!" sneers Nate. "And maybe Niagara Falls is composed of lemonade. The owner is Rags Dempster's old man!"

Hot tamale!

Well, we were up against a serious proposition and no mistake. Not having the faintest of faint ideas that there would be any trouble about the lot since we already had a option on it, we have went ahead with builders, architects, decorators, contractors, and the etc., and you know all that costs important money. If the deal for this lot fell through then, why, we stood to lose a fortune!

But this is one time I made Mr. Rags Dempster like it! I didn't bother going to his father. I knew that would be the same as appealing to the sense of fair play in a famished lion outside a sheep corral. I went right straight to my guardian angel, Mr. John T. Brock, and the best street in the burg ain't called "Brock Avenue" for nothing! By the time I got done telling Mr. Brock what's what he's as burnt up

as I am. By way of the phone he calls a special meeting of the chamber of commerce for the next morning. He's just president of it, that's all. Then he pats me on the back, tells me if I let Gunner Slade stay six rounds he'll be ashamed of me, and says to show up at the chamber of commerce the following morning with my two partners and the money for the lot.

Well, the chamber of commerce meeting was a movie. Besides a lot of influential citizens which I have only a nodding acquaintance with and the nodding is all on my part, there was Lem Garfield, Judge Tuckerman, and Ajariah Stubbs, all with me to the limit in anything at that time. The rest of the heavy business men frowns at me and my partners, but they regard Mr. Brock like he was President Harding. All except old man Dempster, which hurls us a angry glare to split among us.

Mr. Brock wastes no time on preliminaries, but gets right down to business when the meeting is called to order.

"What's all this nonsense I heard about driving this young man out of town?" he bellers in his bull elephant's voice, looking straight at old man Dempster. "A detriment to Drew City, is he? Why, you fools, Gale Galen is the biggest thing this town has ever produced! He's put Drew City on the map and if you meddling idiots will let him alone he'll keep it there. Do you know who he is? A prize fighter, I suppose some doddering imbecile will say. Well, he's not *just* a prize fighter, any more than U. S. Grant was just a general! He's American light-heavyweight champion

and I'll wager anything from one penny to one million he'll soon be champion of the world. Do you know what that means? It means columns and columns of priceless publicity for Drew City. Every time his name is printed in a newspaper in the United States, Drew City is mentioned beside it. People who never heard of our town and never would hear of it unless it was destroyed by an earthquake, now know that Drew City is the home of a champion and everybody is interested in a champion of anything!"

"But—" begins old man Dempster.

"Silence!" yells about a dozen voices.

"Not only that," goes on Mr. Brock—"not only that, this boy has set an example during his residence here that should be held up as a model for the youth of this town! Honest, ambitious, courageous, intelligent, and clean living, fighting for an education denied him through poverty. He came here penniless, unknown, an object of suspicion. Look at him now! Why, he could buy and sell half of you hypocrites in this room! If he wants to go into business here, he should be encouraged and assisted, and if this young man is refused the deed to a certain lot I understand he holds an option on and is now ready to purchase as a site for his proposed enterprise, I will resign from this board right now!" He bangs on the desk and glares around the room. "Well, come on, I'm ready to hear arguments!" he bellers.

Well, there was plenty arguments—but they're all in my favor. Them babies don't wish none of Mr. Brock's game, that's a cinch! Inside half a hour old

man Dempster has sold us his lot without further ado.

The building of our movie theatre proceeds with the greatest of speed and a couple of months later Gunner Slade arrives in America, so I got to go in training for him. The sport writers look Mr. Slade over and then go back to their papers and open up with their typewriters on him. He looks big and husky, they say, but then so does a plate of corned beef and cabbage and they think in justice to the American fight fans he should give them a line on his wares before going up against the best fighter of his class in the country. The Gunner and his manager stalls and stalls, but finally they got to talk turkey. So they take on Battling Hicks over in Jersey City to give the fans a drummer's sample of what they got in stock. I went over with Nate and Knockout Kelly for a eyeful myself.

Battling Hicks was a tough boy in his day, but his day was all over. While he was still a fairly clever boxer, he couldn't punch his way out of a paper bag. I stopped him myself some time ago with a couple of smacks on the chin. He was scared stiff by the Gunner's rep and it turned out to be the sorriest kind of a set-up, only lasting two frames because Gunner Slade was nervous and wild. I came away from that fight more than ever convinced that I held the light-heavyweight championship of the world in my right-hand glove!

Well, the hard-boiled sport writers failed to wax hysterical over Gunner Slade's showing, in spite of the fact that he stopped his man in two rounds. They commence to predict that I'll murder him, till I could of murdered *them* for what they're doing to the gate

receipts of my coming brawl with the Englishman. I guess the Gunner must be quite a newspaper reader, because after seeing what the reporters thought of him he demands more time to get in better shape for me and there's nothing for me to do but give him what he wants. So in that way the time goes by till finally our three-story building is built and the movie theatre on the ground floor is solemnly christened the "Judith" by Judy herself. Her objections vanished like magic when she seen what a cute little trap it was.

Then me, Judy, Spence, Nate, and Kayo Kelly hold a conference for the purposes of doping out some stunt which will open our theatre with a bang. Everybody is called upon to trot out a publicity scheme—a trick which will pack the customers in on the opening night. Knockout Kelly coughs and says he has a wow of a idea and there's no use looking no further for something which will jam the place to the mortgage. I give Kayo permission to take the floor and expose his scheme and Kayo says its very simple—just make Mary Ballinger cashier of the theatre and then try to keep the mob away from the box office!

When the laugh has died away the motion is voted on and Mary gets the job. She's a swell looker at that, and thinks Kayo, which is not no swell looker but is certainly a handsome puncher, is a better man than even Gunga Din. But merely putting Mary in the box office as a decoy ain't just what we're after, so I order more thinking and finally it was no less than me which gets the fatal idea. That is, to open our theatre with a little amateur playlet, put on by local talent. That's

sure to bring in at least the friends and relatives of the young actors, and if we give 'em a good show we'll make 'em permanent customers and boosters.

Judy and Spence thinks my idea is the peacock's knuckles, and even them two ten-minute eggs, Nate and Kayo, gives grudging approval. I leave the details to Spence and Judy, as I have got to ready up for my own little playlet with Gunner Slade in which I hope to play the leading part and I need plenty rehearsals for *that* drama myself!

Well, when Spence pulls the amateur theatrical thing on his girl and boy friends they go double cuckoo over it and there's so many applications that we could of put on Custer's Last Stand and had sixteen more principals than there was in the battle itself. Strangely enough, all the boys want to play the hero and all the girls is strongly in favor of playing the heroine and when I see the trouble Spence and Judy is having trying to keep old friendships and still put the play on, why, I'm glad I'm merely a silent partner in the production. Spence solves the difficulty by sending to New York for a professional director which plays no favorites but picks out for the parts the ones he thinks best suited for 'em and advises the others to buy tickets.

If I had a dollar for every time I have wished I never thought of opening my theatre with a amateur show, there's no sixty banks in the world would be big enough to hold my jack. Battling Luck delivered three punches at me as the net result of that play which cost me a young fortune and come mighty near costing me Judy, the world's championship, and my life!

Punch number one is when the director picks out Rags and Judy for the leading parts in the play. That floored me, but I got up. Punch number two is when Judy comes into dinner from rehearsal one night, all excited and acting like she's just got word that a rich uncle died and left her everything but Baffin's Bay. I ask her what seems to be the trouble, and after stalling a bit she finally says the director has told her she's a born actress and is throwing herself away by staying in Drew City. What she *should* do, this parsnip tells her, is to go to New York, where he's satisfied her talent will get her attention. I leave it to you what this done to *me!*"

"The big stiff!" I says. "I suppose he likewise asked you could he call on you some night and give you more details about going on the stage in New York, hey? I'll go around there and slap him silly!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" says Judy, flaring right up. "Mr. De Haven is a perfect gentleman and I think it's wonderful he should take such an interest in me!"

"Ain't we got fun?" I says, fit to bite nails. "What did you tell him when he invited you to bust into the show business?"

"Don't cross-examine me, Gale," says Judy. "I said I would think it over. I certainly don't intend to be a stenographer *all* my life!"

"I don't expect you to be one all your life, either, Judy." I says. "But please don't go on the stage. That would just about murder me, no fooling! Why, the mere thought of you being a actress is——"

"Just a moment!" Judy butts in, giving me a odd look. "Do you think it any worse for me to become an actress than it is for you to be a pugilist? I don't!"

I'm against the ropes for a fact and before I get a chance to box my ways out, in comes Mrs. Willcox to tell Judy Mr. De Haven would like to speak to her on the phone. Wam! That adds the finishing touch and I bust out of the house without no dinner or nothing. What a fine break *I* got all of a sudden! Rags Dempster playing the hero to Judy's heroine in a play *I'm* paying for, and the director, whose salary I'm also putting up, is stuck on Judy, too. If I had run into both of them birds when I left the house that night there would of been two of the niftiest killings you ever seen in your life!

Now for punch number three, the one which goaled me. The night our theatre opens you couldn't of got inside after seven-thirty p. m. if you had been a thin fly. In fact, me and Nate and Kayo Kelly has got to stand up in the back, as they seems to be two people in each seat. We hire Eddie Granger's Vesper A. C. brass band, paying them famine prices, but they was worth it, because while Eddie is no Sousa they sure did horn a mean overture! Then up goes the curtain and the drama is on.

Well, everything moved along smoothly, though some of these synthetic actors is a little nervous at being right up there on the stage for all the world to look at. But they are going over big with their parents, anyways, which is there in evening clothes and keeps constantly nudging each other with pride and the etc.

Judy never looked better and I guess that director was right, for, honest, she made the rest of 'em look like so many clowns. Rags is in his glory, strutting around like he's the Duke of Diphtheria or something, on the account he's playing the hero of this frolic. Two or three times when he catches my eye he sneers out over the footlights like it was part of the play. This is gradually getting me rosy, but when he has to put his arms around Judy in one of the scenes you could hear my teeth grit in far-off Siberia!

Then some devil must of got into Rags's brain, where they is already a congress of demons. He glances over his shoulder at me and deliberately prolongs this part where he's got his arms around Judy, bending over to kiss her. Judy looks surprised and then frightened and starts backing away across the stage with Rags after her. Everybody else seems to think this is in the play, but somehow I *don't!* At this critical point, Mary Ballinger, which is standing next to Kayo Kelly, whispers:

"Rags must be crazy! I saw all the rehearsals and that's never in the play. Look how scared Judy is!"

That's ample for me and I am starting up to the stage, when Judy backs into a table on which there is a lamp. Rags makes a grab for her and over goes table and lamp with a crash.

Then the panic is on!

The flimsy draperies went up like celluloid, and before I have battled my ways half the distance to the footlights through the yelling, stampeding mob, the stage is a roaring furnace. Nate grabs wildly at my

coat to hold me back, but I shook him off. I also shook off a couple of gents which has went fear-crazy and wants to climb through the roof, using a couple of women for ladders. Short right and left hooks discouraged them babies and in another minute I am on the stage with Judy. She's trying to drag out some girl which has fainted away in a swoon.

Rags Dempster, the hero of the play, has disappeared and so has all the other brave actors. I got Judy outside and I got to snatch her up and carry her out bodily, because she refuses to leave the young lady which is peacefully sleeping on the floor. I went back and got the fainting beauty and also Mrs. Willcox and then I just took 'em as they come, this time with the kind assistance of Knockout Kelly, Nate, Lem Garfield, and a couple of other guys which figured what's a few burns between friends? After a while Engine Company No. 6 arrived, and as long as they was there they figured they might as well put out the fire, so that's what they done.

Our brand-new stage, movie screen, curtains, and all this sort of thing was simply burned out of existence—quite some financial loss and don't think it wasn't! But the toughest break of all for me was the place I got burned. Just imagine what would happen to Katherine MacDonald if her face got burned, or John McCormack if his throat got burned, and you'll get the idea of what it means when I tell you I got badly burned on the things which is my fortune—my *hands!* They're just a puffed mass of raw blisters and in less than three weeks I got to step into the ring

with Gunner Slade and fight for a world's championship.

Well, we manage to keep the thing out of the New York papers, which is one place I don't want it, or there will be nobody show up to see a fight in which one guy is going into the ring with his hands all shot to pieces. Nate fells out the Gunner's pilot on a postponement without letting him know why we'd like one, but there's no chance. For some reason or other Gunner Slade has a longing to return to merry England and he says if the fight don't come off as scheduled he'll beat it back, taking with him my ten-thousand-dollar appearance forfeit. I've had about all the losses I can take, so over Nate's frantic protests I decide to go through with the battle on the advertised date.

One look at the crowd as I climb through the ropes on the night of the quarrel is enough to convince me I'm going deeper into the hole by promoting this International carnival of assault and battery. When I pay Gunner Slade his hundred thousand guarantee and look after the other expenses, about all I'll get for *my* end will be a punch in the nose. The big gaps of empty seats here and there is the answer to the sport writers' stories that Gunner Slade will be a spread for me. If them babies only knew the shape my hands was in as I sit in my corner waiting for the opening bell, why, they wouldn't of been yawning and looking around and acting like they wished they was somewheres else! And if Gunner Slade only knew that Nate had to lance the blisters to tape my hands—well, can you imagine how happy *that* guy would of felt?

I'll pass over the pain I suffered every time I tried to close the gloves on my raw hands and the pain I suffered every time I looked at them empty seats and realized what they meant to my bankroll. It seems to me then that just about the time I started to get somewheres, I always get floored for the count and I'm gloomily wondering am I one of these birds which is *born* to run second? Well, I chase them thoughts out of my mind. After all, the money's a small thing. I can always get more—anybody can. What I devote *my* tumbling thoughts to is that no matter *what* I've lost, I've still got the opportunity of my life in front of me—a chance to become champion of the world at my trick. All I got to do is to knock this glowering English scrapper kicking. Sounds easy, but believe me, it was quite a stunt!

We both stepped out smartly at the bell and I led first to get it over with. My glove socked against Gunner Slade's nose and I nearly fainted with the pain which shot up my arm to the shoulder. It wasn't a stiff punch, either, just a mild left lead, but it was enough to show me that nothing but a miracle could make me knock the Gunner cold with the hands I got with me that night. I then begin to box very cautious, and, the mob which expected to see me sail into Slade and send 'em home early, gets highly indignant and razzes me to a fare-thee-well. The Gunner takes heart from my pacifist tactics and gets down to business himself. He drove me halfways across the ring with a wicked right to the head which didn't do me a bit of good and when I merely crouched, covered up, and

commenced to take it, the crowd goes wild. "Fight, you big stiff!" and "Fake! Fake! Fake!" is just a sample of the choice remarks which greets me on all sides. The least said about the opening frame, the better. I didn't take two punches at Gunner Slade and it must of been fearful to look at!

Round two was a duplicate of the first inning. Gunner Slade made a punching bag out of me, and the customers called me names which will never make me stuck on myself. Toward the end of the round the ringside comment got under my skin and I come out of my shell long enough to crash the surprised Gunner against the ropes with a right and left to the jaw. How them two socks felt to Mr. Slade I don't know, but I *do* know that the pain from that pair of punches with my burned hands brought the water in streams from my eyes and give me a feeling in the pit of my stomach like when you go down in a fast elevator. I immediately went back on the defensive again, unable to follow up my advantage and finish him. The crowd had leaped on the seats when I opened up, now they sank back with groans and hisses. When I run to my corner at the bell I got the same kind of a reception that puss gives Rover.

Gunner Slade come out for the third round with a rush and sent me back on my heels with a poisonous straight left. He then hooked the same glove to my heart and whoever says them English scrappers can't hit is liars. This baby had a kick like two healthy mules! The mob roars when a right and left uppercut bends my knees and the Gunner com-

mences to swing 'em from the floor, thinking it's all over.

The boys which has laid four and five to one on me to win by a knockout is screaming madly for me to take at least *one* punch at the Gunner and not act like a sheep in a slaughter house. I'm all at sea from the punishment I'm taking and the razzing, and in dancing away from one of Slade's wild haymakers I slipped to the canvas on my back, hitting my head with enough force to daze me for a second. The attendance thinks I been knocked stiff and you should of heard 'em. Like the steady roar of a record rain on a tin roof! I took "seven" and got up groggy. Nate yells for me to clinch, but the Gunner beat me to it with a terrible right swing to the pit of the stomach which drops me on my haunches for a clean knockdown. I am a very sick young man when the blessed gong stopped hostilities for that round.

Nate is like a wild man as he drenches me with the water bucket. He rushes over to the referee and begins a argument about Gunner Slade's gloves, demanding that they be examined. Nate knows that their ain't a thing in the world the matter with the Englishman's gloves: what he wants to do is give me a few extra seconds to come back to life. I needed a few years, not a few seconds! This Gunner Slade has cuffed and smacked me till I don't know what it's all about. While the referee and Kayo Kelly is examining the smiling Gunner's gloves, Nate slips back to me and begins to unlace my right glove with feverish haste. Before I can stop him, he pulls a hypodermic syringe

from his pocket and jabs the needle a mile in the side of my throbbing hand.

"Listen!" he pants in my ear. "'At's *cocaine,* get me? It'll start to work in a minute and if they cut your arm off you wouldn't feel a thing! Go out there now and swap wallops with this big tramp. I don't think he can take it and if he could hit he'd of stopped you long ago, because he's already slapped you with everything but the bell. Go on now, kid, *do your stuff!*"

As the gong rung, Nate turns and hands the hypodermic syringe down to a newspaper man which has been watching all this with the greatest of surprise.

Well, I'm a new man when I jump off my stool for the fourth round. With my hand cocained, I figure I'm free to tie into the Gunner and that's what I done! I ducked his straight left and sunk my right under his heart with everything I got behind it and you never seen such a painfully astonished guy in your life. I think that one punch licked Gunner Slade, because his return, skidding off my ear, felt to me like the cuff of a playful kitten. Another torrid right down below opened him up, and while the crowd is still going nutty over the remarkable change which has suddenly come over me, I hooked him flush on the jaw with the same glove. He staggered back against the ropes, floundering around like a drunken man. His seconds shrieked for him to dive into a clinch and I grinned at 'em over my shoulder, measured Slade with a light left and then shot my right at his bobbing jaw. He went down like a German mark and down is where he stayed!

The Gunner's manager and handlers swarm into my corner, yelling something it's hard to hear over the continual roar of the crowd. We finally find out that one of Gunner Slade's seconds seen Nate give me the hypodermic and they're claiming the fight on a foul. Nate bends down and gets back the syringe from the newspaper guy he give it to. Then he hands it to a doctor which has been boosted into the ring.

"'At's plain warm water in that hypo," says Nate carelessly to the interested reporters. "Nothin' else! The doc will tell you as soon as he tests it. If I want to give my man water between rounds, I can do it. I knew if my battler thought he was gettin' cocaine which would soon stop the pain, he'd sail into this Englishman and drop him. 'At's what he done! I kidded him out of 'at pain, I didn't dope him. I keep my eyes open. I see 'em do that same trick once with a hophead. They tell him he's gettin' morphine and he got water, but it works O. K. on this guy for a couple of minutes. I thought they'd be no harm in tryin' the same gag here—'at's all!"

Kayo Kelly has got my gloves off and Nate holds my hands up. They look like a couple of overripe tomatoes and if you don't think they're painful—just burn your hands once!

"Good Heavens, look at his hands!" gasps the sport writer from the "Sphere." *"And he knocked Slade out with 'em!"* he almost whispers.

"He got 'at in a fire; I'll give you the dope as soon as the doc here fixes up them hands," says Nate. Then

he bends over me. "They must hurt like hell, don't they, kid?" he says anxiously.

What do *I* care if they hurt or not? I'm light-heavyweight champion of the world!

ROUND TEN

THE END OF A PERFECT FRAY

THE other night I am wrestling with "Paradise Lost," a novel by Johnny Milton. It's one of the stories Judy picked out for me to read, so it must mean something, but between you and me and Kemal Pasha I can't make head or tail out of it and that's a fact! It's all poetry and, to make it harder, none of it rimes. I wouldn't be surprised if it ain't a little too rich for my blood yet, hey? That's been one of my greatest troubles—separating the stuff which will help me and the stuff which won't from the mass of volumes I am studying. I been taking learning in mass formation, devouring books like "Romeo and Juliet" and "The Art of Embalming" in the same day, and that last one is hard to work into the average conversation, what I mean!

Well, knocking out Gunner Slade for the light-heavyweight crown I realized one of the greatest ambitions of my life—I went to the top in the game I was in. I was a world's champion! Even though I hadn't picked boxing as my life work, the fact that I was king in my division gave me more satisfaction than I can put down here on paper. It's a hobby of mine to

want to finish first in anything I try. Why, even if I fell off Washington's Monument my one wish on the way down would be that as long as I was going to hit the ground at all, I'd hit it so hard that it would stand as a record for all time!

After I have smacked Gunner Slade for a mock turtle, Judy reminds me of my vow to quit the ring and bust head first into the business world. I had stalled Judy and talked her out of this thing a million times before, but this time it was a showdown—I have to give up either Judy or the prize-ring, I can't have both!

To quit this game before I've even got used to seeing "World's Champion" beside my name was to me like climbing the highest mountain in the world, reaching the summit bruised and winded, and then deliberately jumping off before enjoying the view from the top. But Judy is—Judy! So while the sport writers is still commenting on my sensational victory over Gunner Slade and guessing who I'll battle next, I throwed a bombshell into their midst by announcing my retirement from the ring.

A lot of my friends thought this was just another one of my publicity stunts and they merely smiled, but it wasn't no publicity stunt, I was in dead earnest. When the sport writers find out I am not kidding, why, they laced into me with a gusto! One paper even said that the beating I had took from Gunner Slade before I slapped him double cuckoo had ruined me for life. Others roasted me to a fare-thee-well and let it go at that. All this stuff was fine for Mr. Gunner

Slade which immediately gets terrible rosey. This dizzy boloney squawks that he lost to me on a fluke punch, challenges me for a return bout, and when I don't answer he claims the light-heavyweight title. This makes me laugh, as I know I can take Gunner Slade every day in the week if necessary and I guess the Gunner knows it too, or else he's a fellow which is opposed to learning by experience.

However, there is one baby which don't get no merriment out of my leaving the ring and that's Nate Shapiro.

When Nate reads all that stuff in the New York papers he comes to me in a high rage.

"You wanna quit this clownin', kid," he says, waving a newspaper at me. "We got a quarter-million-dollar year starin' us right in the face and this applesauce you're givin' out about leavin' the ring is gettin' the promoters nervous—you ought to see the wires I got this mornin'. I been busy phonin' the New York papers for the last three hours, tellin' 'em your retirement is April Fool!"

"Nate, I am not clowning," I says, gently but firmly. "I have fought my last box fight, and that's all there is to it! I promised Judy I would call it a day when I win the light-heavyweight championship of the world. Well, I win it, so I'm through. Let's say it was a fool promise—all right, I *made* it and I got to keep it. Anyways, having won the title, what else is there for me to shoot at as a boxer?"

"What *else* is they for you to shoot at?" howls Nate, when he can talk. "They's a million dollars for you to

shoot at, you dumbell! Have you got so much jack that you can turn down a million without flickin' a muscle?"

"Shut up!" I growls. "Don't make me feel no worse than I already do. Maybe we can make a fortune out of our picture theatre."

"And maybe Lake Erie is a tennis court!" hollers Nate. "I know what's the matter with you, studyin' them books night and day has made you cuckoo! I warned you to lay off 'at stuff. What do *you* want with a education? The chances is if you'd of had one you'd be a chauffeur of a addin' machine in some guy's office now for about twenty-five bucks a week, instead of bein' able to click off that much a punch! Did you wade through these tomatoes to the championship simply so's you could have the pleasure of quittin' the ring the first chance you got to make money like they make it in the mint? I took you from behind a soda fountain and made you and the minute we both get a chance to collect heavy you throw me down!"

"I ain't throwing you down any more than I'm throwing myself down, Nate," I says. "But—a promise is a promise! If Judy——"

"Let *me* talk to Miss Willcox," butts in Nate. "I bet she ain't got the slightest of slight ideas just what she's askin' you to give up. When I show her the dough we can take down in the next year, the chances is 'at not only will she want you to stay in the ring, but she'll expect you to go around pickin' fights in the streets!"

But she didn't, and after a four-day ceaseless attack

on her objections, Nate throwed up the sponge. Then he turned his attentions to me again and again he is thrown for a loss. I didn't want to quit the ring and toss away the jack I could make as a champ any more than I wanted to go to the hospital and have my ears cut off, but rather than lose Judy's friendship I'd give up anything! When Nate finds his threats and pleadings is useless, he gets maniacal with rage and tells me he's going to sell his interest in our picture theatre, check out of Drew City, and go back to live in New York, taking Kayo Kelly with him. That was a blow to me indeed, as I had come to look on Nate and Kayo as face cards in any man's deck. What I'll do if they both desert me was a fresh problem for my busy mind.

However, Knockout Kelly solved that for me himself in a short but highly interesting speech he made when Nate told him to pack his collars for the voyage to New York.

"No can do, Nate," says Kayo, shaking his head. "Me and this slab is gettin' along fine. I think I'll stick here with Gale and see what happens. Besides, the further away I stay from Broadway the better for all concerned. A married man ain't got no business steppin' out and——"

"A *married* man!" yells Nate, grabbing Kayo by the shoulders. "And I thought you was blonde-proof! Have you went to work and wed somebody on me, you big sapolio?"

Kayo shakes himself loose. "Well, I ain't exactly a matrimaniac yet," he says, with a sickly grin. "But I *will* be in a few weeks. Me and Mary Ballinger has

signed articles for the popular finish fight! I'm a bum picker, hey?"

"You lucky stiff!" I says, shaking Kayo's hand. "Congratulations!"

"Mary's lucky too," says Kayo, calmly. "I ain't exactly what you could call a poor investment for no girl. Maybe I ain't no second Valentino, but Mary will never have to worry about where her next limousine is comin' from! I——"

But then Nate has got his breath back and he whinneys with rage.

"Shut up, you ingrateful banana!" he cuts in. "Both you babies is givin' me a pushin' around, hey? Well, either of you try to fight for somebody else and you'll see twice as many lawyers as you thought they was in the business. I got you both sewed up to iron-bound contracts, black on white, and if you think you can laugh *that* off, you're goofey!"

"Nate," says Kayo, laying his hand on our raging manager's arm, "nobody's got no intentions of boxin' for some other pilot. You got it all wrong. I'd part with my right arm in the middle of a fight if you wanted it and I know Gale would too. But—I'm gettin' along, Nate. I can still put the parsnips on the floor, but I ain't as burly as I used to be. The old wind ain't there and I can't take a pastin' like I used to could take one. What is they in this game for me any more but punishment? On the other hand, I got a bank roll, a interest in our theatre here, and the sweetest girl in the wide, wide world thinks I'm the snake's hips. What more could I ask? Why, Nate, I

wouldn't go six inches away from this burg now! Something tells me that it ain't goin' to be no century before Gale here will be the biggest guy either of us knows. This baby's goin' to get over and don't think he won't. Well, I'm goin' to be with him when that day comes, because I figure that anybody which is with him will be a winner too!"

Nate's ready to tear his hair and I bet he could of got ten years for what he's thinking about both of us.

"But you got to mingle with Battlin' Murphy at Syracuse in a month!" he roars at Kayo, "how 'bout that?"

"I'll file Murphy's application," says Kayo, coolly, "I'm sittin' pretty here now, Nate, and to tell you the truth I don't care if I smack another guy in my life again or not! Anyways, Mary don't wish me all marked up for the weddin'."

"I fail to see what difference it would make whether you got marked up or not," sneers Nate. "You got a pan on you now like a gorilla!"

"Mary likes it!" grins Kayo. "No use, Nate, you can't even get me sore. If I was you, I'd grab myself off a nice little girl in this town and throw in with us. As Nero says when he burned Rome, 'It's all fun!' A married man can go twice as far as a bachelor."

"Twice as far in bad, in debt and insane!" snarls Nate. "I'm off both you bozos for life—get wed and be damned to you. I'm goin' to leave this trap and go to New York!"

But I'm glad to report that Mrs. Willcox prevailed on Nate to stick around and await further developments.

Well, along around this time the New York papers is full of nothing but the big merger Mr. Brock has brought about among the locomotive manufacturers with him at the head of the whole business. His picture is printed alongside of Rockefeller, Morgan, Ford, and a couple of other feilows which has promising futures, and he's spoken of as one of the richest men in the world. When he comes back to Drew City from putting over that merger in New York, he gets a reception like a king gets—in a movie—and it tickles him silly. It seems millionaires is human beings, even as you and me. So he turns right around and makes the town a present of a quarter-million-dollar hospital and he couldn't of give them nothing more to the point, because the hospital they already had there wasn't equipped to handle nothing more serious than, say, dandruff or chapped hands.

Well, the day the corner stone was laid is a day me and Drew City won't forget for a long time. Mayor Baxter pronounces it a legal holiday and the whole burg turns out for the ceremonies. Eddie Granger's Vesper A. C. Brass Band had a field day, the streets is buried under flags and bunting and speeches flowed like water. The principal spellbinders, as usual, was Lem Garfield, and Judge Tuckerman. When they got through doing their stuff, Mr. Brock tied in. Then comes the big surprise of the day—to *me* anyways. I am sitting on the speaker's platform with Spence and Judy when Mr. Brock finishes his speech amid a tornado of applause. He turns around and sees me and a big smile spreads itself across his face. Then he nods

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LOVE BLOOMS EVEN IN THE KITCHEN.

for me to come over to him. I can't imagine what he wants with me out there before all that crowd of mingled friends and enemies, but up I get and walk over while the mob looks on in astonishment. Mr. Brock lays one hand on my shoulder and holds up the other one for silence. He gets immediate service, like usual.

"Fellow citizens!" he says, in his booming voice. "I wish to bring to your notice the most interesting object in Drew City—Mr. Gale Galen. Yesterday a penniless, friendless, ambition-driven wanderer; to-day, world's champion light-heavyweight boxer with a modest fortune and a handsome income; to-morrow—who knows? Who can say to what heights this remarkable young man will go? He is still a mere boy, yet consider what he has already accomplished. You young men who are ambitious and determined to make your mark in the world, don't waste your precious time reading the lives of successful men written by flattering biographers, observe the progress of Gale Galen, use him as a living textbook, for one day you will be proud of having produced him in Drew City!"

Well, that's just a preliminary. He says a lot more about me, while my face gets so red I bet you could of saw the reflection a mile away. When he finishes, Spence starts some applause which grows till it gets to what the "Daily Sentinel" the next day calls a ovation.

Mr. Brock's speech about me makes a awful hit with Spence, Judy, and her mother. They act as proud as if I had really did something to deserve all that praise

from a man like him. But it likewise made me a few more enemies, as envy is a staple product of a small town. But in particular, it broils Rags Dempster and his father. They already hated me, and after Mr. Brock got done telling the world what a knockout he thinks I am, why, their feelings for me before was infatuation alongside of the way they loathe me now.

The first comeback I get from the effects of Mr. Brock's speech on them babies is when the Board of Trade puts on the ice for me and my partners. Although we are owners of a theatre in the town, we are not called into any of the conferences the board holds with the other business men for the praiseworthy purposes of making the natives blow their dough in Drew City instead of taking it into New York. They frame up all kind of schemes, bargain days, "Help Local Merchants!" weeks, and this and that, inviting all the other storekeepers to turn in ideas, but they don't give us a tumble. When I go around to solicit ads for our screen, the only guy I can line up is old Ajariah Stubbs. The rest of these bozos just laugh me off.

I don't have to consult no fortune teller to find out what all this means. Sore at the interest Mr. Brock is taking in me, Rags and his father is simply bearing down on me through the Board of Trade, hoping I'll get discouraged and leave town. But they didn't know me as well as they thought they did! Of course, this stuff annoys me, but the ring ain't the only place where I can take punishment. In fact, I don't get good till the going gets tough! So I go right ahead planning publicity stunts and business getters for our theatre,

giving the customers as much as I can for their jack and still make money. It ain't long before I had built up a regular trade which packed the place every night. The mob was all pleased and me and Nate and Kayo was winning dough on our investment.

Then one day Mr. Brock wants to know why I don't appear at the Board of Trade meetings with the other business men. I am no squawker, so I simply says I have never been invited and let it go at that. He gives me a shrewd look.

"Never been invited, eh?" he says, frowning. "So that's the way the wind blows. Well, son, you *will* be invited!"

"I don't think so, sir," I says. "I can't make them like me if they don't want to."

"No?" he says sharply. "Well, *I* can! There will be a meeting of the board at ten to-morrow morning. Be there!"

As life to me those days was just one big surprise after another, it took a whole lot to give me a kick, but what happened at that Board of Trade meeting the next day furnished me with a thrill I'll be a long time forgetting. The board appears astonished at seeing me in the hall, but before Mr. Brock got through with 'em they was double dumbfounded. He's president of the board, but seldom shows up at the meetings, as he's too busy with his other interests. When he does show up the fur flies, and this day was no exception. Before any of the business of the meeting could get under way, Mr. Brock calls 'em to order. Then he takes the floor, with me standing beside him.

"Gentlemen," he says, "let me introduce Mr. Gale Galen, proprietor of the Judith Theatre, on Main Street, and one of the most promising young business men of Drew City. He would be a credit to *any* city and should be encouraged to stay here and assisted to prosper. I want to see him at these meetings, because his youth, enthusiasm, and ambition will probably make this a real chamber of commerce, instead of a gathering place for knockers and calamity howlers as it is now. *I, therefore, move that Mr. Galen be appointed a member of this board!*"

That goaled 'em!

Rags Dempster's father looks like he's on the brinks of death from appoplexy, and my enemies rallies around him, bawling angry protests. Mr. Brock says nothing at all, leaving it to the bootlicking jazzbos which worships the ground he walks on to take his part and mine. At the end of a boisterous half hour I have been elected to the Drew City Board of Trade by a vote of 20 to 4.

Old Man Dempster immediately resigns and takes the air.

Well, now that I was out of the ring I didn't have to train no more and I found time hanging heavy on my hands. I never was born to stall around, that's a cinch! Even if I had a million I'd find *something* to do and don't think I wouldn't, but as things stood then I was far from a millionaire. I lost a frightful bunch of jack promoting that fight with Gunner Slade, and the fire we had in our theatre also put a heavy dent in the old bankroll. I'm commencing to get worried

and restless. The papers is still riding Nate for not matching me with somebody, and of course, Nate's still riding me.

Not only are my hands itching for the feel of the padded gloves, but I actually need the money. So I make up my mind I'll take a long chance and tackle Judy on the subject of box fighting again, not that I got much hope that she'll remove the ban, but a marvelous offer from a big New York promoter for a fight drives me to doing something. So one day in the office I put it up to Judy, cold.

"Eh—say, Judy, would you mind if I went back to the ring for just one more scuffle?" I stammers, losing forty pounds of nerve with every word as she stares at me with wide open eyes and a gathering frown between 'em.

"I thought we were all through with that subject, Gale," she says in kind of pained surprise. "You are well started on a business career, a member of the Board of Trade, your theatre is making money, and ——"

"Just a minute, Judy," I butt in. "The theatre is making money all right, but when the profits is divided between me and Nate and Kayo Kelly, why, none of us gets enough to go wild about. As far as being started on a business career is concerned, maybe I am, but I don't think I got the right kind of a start. In other words, I feel that to wind up merely as part owner of a small-town picture theatre, after all my trials and tribulations, is much ado about nothing, as Willie Shakespeare says!"

Judy don't say a word. She just sits there looking out the window at Drew City and tapping her desk with a lead pencil. So I took heart and trot out some more facts and figures.

"I wouldn't of mentioned the adjective box fighting to you, Judy, under no circumstances," I says, "only Nate's got a offer for me to fight Jack Martin, this new sensation which has been flattening one and all in the light-heavyweight class. There's seventy-five thousand dollars in it for me and with that amount of jack added to the little dough I already got I could go into some business with a more exciting future to it than running a picture theatre in Drew City. Seventy-five grand would be important money to Rockefeller, and *I* certainly can't dismiss it with a curl of my lip!"

"Nevertheless, Gale," says Judy, swinging around and facing me, "if you return to the ring, our—our friendship comes to an end. There is no use arguing about it because I will never change on that point. The picture theatre is only a beginning, and you are young. With Mr. Brock's influence and your own prestige here you have a splendid and honorable career facing you. If you go back to the prize ring, you will lose all of that—everything you have been striving for——"

"Including you, Judy?" I butt in.

"Including me!" she says—and then, her face suddenly flaming red, she flounces out of the office.

Well, I'm in a fine state of mind and don't think I ain't. I don't want to lose my chances with Judy no more than I want to lose my neck, but at one and the same time I can't get no kick out of my position in

life then, no fooling. However, I let the subject drop as far as Judy is concerned and continue studying every book I can lay my hands on and attending lectures with her at Columbia's College, New York.

In the meanwhile Rags is put in charge of the carpet factory by his father, which is forced to go to Europe for his health, according to the Drew City "Sentinel." However, a few days later it comes out in the New York papers that he just dropped $300,000 in Wall Street, so I guess he went across the bounding main to get over his dizziness, and I don't blame him. Anyways, old Mr. Dempster must of been still suffering from shell shock when he made Rags manager of his rug plant, because Rags is no more fit to handle men than I'm fit to handle Dempsey. He ain't been on the job a week before he brings about a strike through his surliness, inexperience, and high-handed methods of dealing with trained workers which had been years on his father's pay roll. So for the first time in its history the Dempster & Co. mill shuts down. Then Rags pulls the boss boner of a lifetime devoted to making boneheaded plays. When a delegation of the men comes to pay him the honors of a visit, Rags refuses to treat with 'em, calls 'em ungrateful hounds, and slams the door in their faces. Not satisfied with a stunt like that, this 87-carat dumbell brings down a lot of gunmen and the like from New York to take the places of the strikers at about twice the wages the old hands was getting.

Then the fun began!

At first, the strikers just parade and hold mass meet-

ings. Then one morning Rags drives down to his office and discovers every window in the factory has been broke during the night. After that a couple of mysterious fires in the plant is just discovered before they get going good. This would of been the tip-off to anybody but a egg like Rags that the time had arrived to get a rush of brains to the head and talk matters over with the strikers, before they quit kidding with him and do something serious. But Rags is one of these thick headed babies which has got to die of pneumonia before they learn that neglecting a cold is dangerous. He keeps on aggravating the men till he's got 'em all ugly enough to cook him and one night they try to do that!

I am buzzing along the State road near the carpet factory in my car with Judy when we hear a yelling and shouting like I've often heard at a ringside when a fellow is getting knocked stiff. The next minute we swing around a bend and I got to jam on the emergency brake to keep from running into a howling, milling mob which completely blocks the road. A lot of them is running around tearing open pillows and gathering up the feathers, and on one side is a barrel of boiling pitch. Two fellows is prancing around with a long fence rail between 'em, hollering for the others to speed things up. None of 'em gives me and Judy a tumble, but Judy gets a bit scared and tells me to turn around and go back.

"What's all the excitement?" I call to one fellow which comes up with his arms full of feathers.

"We got this young Dempster skunk," he snarls,

"and we're gonna teach him he can't take the bread and butter out of our mouths and get away with it. We're gonna tar and feather the yellah dog!"

"And ride him on a rail out of town!" adds another ex-carpet weaver joyfully.

Judy gasps and I must say for a split second I felt highly tickled. Rags has double-crossed, framed, and fouled me so often that I wouldn't be human if I didn't get a kick out of seeing him get the worst of it, a reward he richly deserves. I step on the gas and start to steer my bus back through the mob and then all of a sudden I stop dead. I don't know what's the matter with me, but I'm simply crazy about fair play! If just one guy had wanted to tar and feather Rags I would of declared the scheme a good thought and wished him the best of luck, but there's over two hundred of these strikers, and two hundred to one is no fair, not even against a Rags Dempster, now is it? So I dash out of the car and shove my ways through the crowd. I know nearly all of 'em and all of 'em knows me and even in the excitement they make room for the world's light-heavyweight champion.

Rags is in the center of the mob and he sure looks like he's been through the mill, he does for a fact. Half his clothes has been tore off by willing hands, his chalk white face is all bruised and scratched and two or three huskies is pushing him around between 'em like he's a medicine ball.

"Lynch him! String him up! Get a rope!" they commence to howl on the outskirts of the mob.

Rags looks wildly about, recognizes me all of a sud-

den and grabs me. "Save me, Galen, save me—they're going to kill me!" he babbles.

The fellows around him falls back and glares at me. Some of 'em jostles against me, and I backed away carefully, pushing Rags behind me. I didn't make the mistake of hitting nobody. That would of spoiled everything—including me.

"Well, what are *you* buttin' in for?" growls a big guy, shoving out his chin invitingly.

"I am butting in to prevent you babies from committing murder," I says. "I don't like this Dempster no more than you do, but if he dies as the results of your nursery sports here to-night the grand jury will indict the lot of you for manslaughter. What's the use of getting yourselves in a jam like that on account of a fellow like this? Look at him. He's half dead now —a total loss if there ever was one!"

There's plenty growling, but the ringleaders around me looks thoughtful. The mention of "manslaughter" and "grand jury" had cooled 'em off a bit and then at this critical minute Rags slumps down to the ground in a dead faint. The crowd begins to melt away around us and somebody tells the others which comes crowding up to see what stopped the festivities that Rags has dropped dead. That was enough! In twenty minutes there was nobody on hand but me and Rags and Judy and we drove the slightly shopworn young man home.

Well, with nothing else to do I spent most of my spare time hanging around Ajariah Stubbs's drug store with Spence Brock. Spence had graduated from Princeton and was now a full-fledged Bachelor of

Arts, but he wasn't quite ready yet to hang out his sign and begin business at that trade. I was still doping out schemes for old Ajariah to help keep his stock moving and fussing around the soda fountain where I used to do my stuff, composing new drinks and writing trade-pulling signs to paste on the mirror back of the counter. But this stuff was all applesauce to me. It was just so much child's play. I should of been doing something big and this puttering around was driving me cuckoo. Then there's another thing which was getting on my nerves and wearing me down. That's the difference in the way the town treated me since I become a fightless champion. The kids didn't follow me on the streets no more, instead they'd cross to the other side and make cracks to each other which set 'em all laughing and looking at me.

I go in Kale Yackley's cigar store one day and over in a corner some of the hard guys from Nichmeyer's Garage is playing stud poker. When I come in they pay as much attention to me as they do to their hole card and that's a face. I hear somebody whisper "Sure, that's him. H's light-heavyweight champ, but the big stiff won't fight nobody! They's a dozen boloneys can take him right now and he knows it. I wouldn't be afraid to take a cuff at him myself!" A couple of months before them guys would of acted tickled all day if I spoke to 'em. Such is life!

Then this Jack Martin stops Gunner Slade in one busy round where it took me four, so Martin claims the title, as I won't accept his challenge. Even my best friends, outside of Judy, commences to hint that

I should fight Martin and stop this talk about me being fainthearted. They keep after me night and day till I'm red-headed and find sleep comes under the head of the impossibles as far as I'm concerned. I worried off ten pounds in less than two weeks, on the level! Finally, I just can't stand things no longer and one morning after my usual sleepless night I sent Nate to whooping with joy by telling him to accept the offer of $75,000 for a scuffle with Jack Martin. I don't want to promote the bout myself, as I figure it will take all my time and energies to get in shape for this man killer.

When I try to tell Judy how I have been drove into this fight she waves me away, white to the lips. I never seen her so mad. She won't listen to nothing at all, but throws up her job as stenographer in our office and won't even speak to me at her mother's boarding house.

A few nights later Rags comes around, stalling that he wants to see Mrs. Willcox about something or other, and when I come by the parlor around nine o'clock, why Judy is in there talking to him with her mother. Well, that's the last straw which fractured the camel's back, and the next day I packed up and move to the Commercial House, the unhappiest fellow in America by a wide margin. As far as I can see, I have lost Judy forever and a day, and I get so careless in my training for Jack Martin that Nate predicts this bozo will flatten me in a round if I don't snap into it. Nate and Knockout Kelly remains at Mrs. Willcox's boarding house, and I get reports on Judy from them. I

find out she's got a job in New York, but what this job is neither Nate or Kayo seems to know.

Then one day, weeks after I have left Mrs. Willcox's, I am putting Nate through the third degree when he says he's heard Judy speak of "rehearsals" and "make-up." This information makes me a first-class lunatic! I know what it means.

Sleep and me couldn't get together at all that night, and the next day I follow Judy to New York without her knowing it. My worst fears is realized when I find out that she is one of the chorus girls in a Broadway musical comedy. Just think of it, Judy a chorus girl! I got a ticket away back in the balcony, where she wouldn't be liable to see me, and I sit through that show like a fellow in a dream—a nightmare! I ain't got the faintest idea what the play is all about, and I couldn't repeat two words from that show if my life depends on it. All I can see is Judy, and I imagine everybody around me knows how I feel and notices that I dig my nails inches into the palms of my hands as I watch the girl I am crazy about, out there on that stage for all these fatheads to look at. There's no use of me trying to explain my sensations to you. If you really wish to know how I felt, go and get in love!

The minute the curtain goes down on the last act of this frolic I beat it around to the stage door, determined to have it out with Judy for once and for all. I'm prepared to make any concession if she'll quit this show. With these thoughts in my head I tear around to the back of the theatre and all but stumble over Rags Dempster. Of course he's waiting there to see Judy,

and he makes a couple of cracks to me with the regards to her being in the show which put me in a murderous frame of mind, but I lay off him because I know a meelee outside the theatre with this hound would ruin any chance I might have of making up with Judy.

I give the doorkeeper my card to take in to her, and Rags sends his in too, and then we stand there waiting, glaring at each other like a couple of strange bulldogs. Finally the doorkeeper comes out and hands me back my card. Judy has wrote on it: "I will be out in twenty minutes. Wait!"

Just looking at her handwriting again sends my heart banging against my ribs, and I can't help grinning at Rags when I read her message. The doorkeeper turns to him and says: "They was no answer for *you,* young feller, so on your way. It's against the rules to allow you Johns to hang around the stage door. Take the air!"

I took Judy home from the theatre that night, and I only wish she had lived in San Francisco instead of Drew City, which is a mere thirty-eight miles from New York, and when we get there I ain't touched on a tenth of the subjects we got to talk about. The main thing, of course, is the question of whether or not she will give up the stage. She's got just one answer for that and nothing will change it. If I will call off my coming fight with Jack Martin and keep my word to stay out of the ring, she'll leave the stage. If I fight Jack Martin or Jack anybody, she will go on the road with this show, which is due to leave New York in a month for forty weeks around the U. S.

Well, when I am with Judy, I would promise her

anything. Nothing she asks sounds unreasonable to me. So, without thinking or caring about the consequences, in fact, thinking only that if I fight Martin I lose Judy, I give her my word I will cancel the bout, although it's already been heavily advertised and I got a ten-thousand-dollar appearance forfeit up. A fellow in love is a hot sketch, ain't he?

The next morning I move back to Mrs. Willcox's from the Commercial House, a thing which gives Knockout Kelly and Nate a lot of laughs. Nate says watching me and Judy is more fun than watching a circus, but when I tell him I ain't got the slightest intentions of boxing Jack Martin, why, all the fun disappears as far as Nate is concerned. At first he just simply won't believe me, but when I convince him I am not kidding he goes triple cuckoo, raving around the house like a maniac. Two or three times we nearly come to blows and would of did so, only I don't want to cuff Nate by no means, though some of his comments about me running out of the Martin match would of made a rabbit cuff a bulldog.

When the sport writers recovered from their amazement at my second resignation from the ring they went after me with their heavy artillery in earnest. What they called me before was affectionate terms of endearment alongside of the way they referred to me now. "Cheese champion," "false alarm," and "yellow" is just a few of the labels they tacked after my name in their columns, and many of 'em recognized Jack Martin's claim to the light-heavyweight championship since I refused to defend the title.

In Drew City I am treated like I got smallpox, even people which used to be my warmest admirers giving me the air. Judge Tuckerman, Lem Garfield, old Ajariah Stubbs, Spence, and a lot of others don't hesitate to tell me they think I am making a serious mistake in not meeting Martin, but the hardest blow of all is when Mr. Brock sees me at a Board of Trade meeting one day and wants to know what's all this nonsense about me canceling my fight with Jack Martin. When I tell him it ain't nonsense he acts like he's astounded and says he's disappointed in me. Then he walks away before I can explain matters to him, and when I meet him on the street a couple of days afterward he gives me the ice.

I heard from Spence later that his father had bet $25,000 on me to whip Martin, and as it was a "play or pay" bet he stands to lose the jack if I don't fight.

Well, the next couple of weeks in Drew City was about the most miserable I ever spent in my life. Although I have banged around considerable since I been a kid, and took a lot of punishment, both mental and physical, I am not used to being treated like a dog and I never will get used to it! Judy was simply wonderful to me, and of course that helped a lot, but it did hurt to have all my old friends practically pass me up. Then again, to lose my standing in Drew City through no fault of mine after all the time I had spent trying to mean something there, was not easy to take either. However, I said nothing to Judy, though a word from her would of sent me into the ring against Jack Martin and change all this. I

figured she thought she was doing the best thing, in keeping me from boxing, and I'd rather have her friendship than all the others put together.

Then one day, just when things look blackest for me, the sun comes busting through the clouds, as it always will if a fellow will have the nerve and patience to face out the rain. I was sitting out on the porch after dinner, alone as usual, when Judy comes out and lays her hand on my shoulder.

"Gale," she says quietly, "I have been thinking things over and I realize the position I have placed you in by making you cancel your fight with Jack Martin. I can't stand them calling you a quitter and a coward, and I don't think it is good for a spirit such as yours is to suffer that sort of thing in silence. If you want to fight Martin, go ahead. And I hope you'll win!"

Well, for a minute I can't believe my ears, and then I let out a yell of joy. I beat it over to the theatre and tell Nate the good news and we both cavorted around in the lobby till the incoming and outgoing customers views us with alarm. While Nate goes down to the railroad station and keeps the telegraph operator awake sending wires to the newspapers, Jack Martin's pilot and the fight promoter, me and our moving-picture operator fixed up a slide and throwed it on the screen in our theatre: "Six-Second Smith has just agreed to fight Jack Martin for the World's light-heavyweight title!" The applause like to raise the roof, and it did raise my spirits to a height they had not been for many's the day.

The next day I am back in training again, and the big barn which Nate had fitted up as a first-class gym was packed to the doors every afternoon. Mr. Brock drops around in a few days to watch me work out, and he's as friendly toward me as he ever was now that I'm going through with the fight. Besides Knockout Kelly, Tommy O'Ryan, and Two-Punch Jackson, which helped condition me as usual, I got a couple of fast lightweights down from New York to box with for speed.

I figured it was high time I paid more attention to the scientific end of the game, feeling that I'd been taking too much punishment and too many unnecessary chances in my fights through my willingness to trade punches. I wanted to avoid getting cut up in the future. The rough and tough stuff was all right when I was a preliminary boloney, but now that I was a champion I wanted to fight like a champion and not like a longshoreman on a dock.

Nate, however, yelled murder about my method of training for Martin. I ought to devote all my time to developing my punch, says Nate, and leave the boxing run for the end book.

"You're a prize fighter and not no chorus girl, and it don't make no difference whether you get marked up or not, as long as you win!" Nate tells me. "I don't like to see you learnin' so much about gettin' *away* from punches—you can't knock anybody dead by back pedalin' all over the ring. You got a poisonous wallop, and I don't want you to sacrifice it to speed. I've saw dozens of guys which was natural hitters like you lose

championships when they tried to become boxers. You can sock and you can take it—any further knowledge to a scrapper like you is a handicap!"

Never the less I kept on training in my own way right up to the day of the fight, and I went into the ring with Martin determined to give him a boxing lesson and amaze the crowd with my science. The cold reception I got from the mob, mostly because they thought I had tried to avoid meeting Martin, only made me more determined to show them some sparring the like of which they had never witnessed before.

Martin come out carefully at the bell, expecting my usual rush, but I surprised him and the customers by tripping around like a dancing master and letting him do the forcing. We exchanged a half dozen light taps, with Martin taking no chances, evidently fearing my pacifist tactics was a trick. He worked a wicked straight left that I couldn't seem to solve, and before we have gone a minute I can see I am up against a master boxer which is making me look like a novice. The crowd hoots and howls for me to quit being yellow and fight, but I continue to dance around Martin, occasionally shooting in short rights, most of which bounces harmlessly off his bent arms or shoulders. This fellow was a boxing fool and no mistake, and he's getting more confident every second as the expected avalanche of wallops fails to mow him down.

The first round ended in Martin's favor by a wide margin, though neither of us had did any real damage. The attendance is bitterly complaining and howling "Fake!" During the rest Nate tells me if I don't quit

clowning and tie into this baby he will walk out of the arena and leave me flat.

Martin rushed in with a stinging left to the jaw at the beginning of the second frame, but I blocked a right to the same place and made him change feet with a torrid left hook to the heart. After a short clinch we begin light sparring again, and again the crowd howls for action. Martin then missed an overhand right for the jaw, and, suddenly changing his boxing tactics, begins swinging them from all angles, evidently figuring to catch me by surprise by his sudden change of pace and probably knock me kicking. The crowd came to its feet with his flurry, and I was a busy young man for the next few seconds trying to keep on my feet. I still continue to box, and a right swing to the jaw buckled my knees under me. I tried to dive into a clinch till my head cleared, but Martin had me figured and swished over a terrific left swing that broke my nose at the bridge and covered me with gore just as the bell rang.

The house was in a uproar as I slid into my stool, but they ain't in half the uproar I'm in, and that's a fact. In spite of all my precautions and the time I wasted studying a defense, this big banana has broke my nose and marked me for life!

Before the echo of the bell has died out for Round Three, I am in Martin's corner swinging both hands to the head. I have forgot they is such a thing as *boxing* in the book. I want to pulverize this baby and show the howling mob whether or not I'm yellow.

Just to prove that I can take it, and am not adverse

to doing the same, I let Martin throw four punches at my head and jaw without a return. Then I set myself and shot a left to the body and a right to the jaw. Martin crashed against the ropes and rebounded into another right I had started, which toppled him clean through the ropes out of the ring. Wow, you should of heard the crowd!

Well, they was plenty of jack bet on Martin, and he's shoved back into the ring by dozens of willing hands. The referee has reached "eight" when Martin struggles to a upright position with his back against the ropes. He's out on his feet, and I don't want to hit him, so I ask the referee to stop it. This kind-hearted official snarls for me to go on fighting, adding that the fact of Martin still being on his feet has probably broke my heart. While I'm standing there arguing with him, with my hands at my side, Martin stumbles up from in back of me and shoots a right at my head, knocking me flat. Then—the bell.

Well, that foul blow of Martin's removed my last scrupple about making him like it. I rushed across the ring at the gong for the fourth frame and staggered him with a left to the head. I then ducked a wild right haymaker and dug both gloves into his body, fighting him off with short inside rights when he tried desperately to clinch. On the break Martin caught me flush on the jaw with his right, but I had just about punched the steam out of this baby, and the blow didn't even shake me up. I closed his left eye with a couple of well-timed rights, and then proceeded to beat him from pillar to post. Only by continual clinching did

Mr. Martin save himself from going out in that frame.

Seeing their man had no chance, his seconds set up a cry of foul when I dropped him to his knees with a right to the stomach just before the gong. That punch was as clean as a baby's heart, as most of the crowd knew. The referee is about to allow Martin's claim of foul when Mr. Brock, who is sitting in a box with the chairman of the State Boxing Commission, butts in, and after a couple of minutes' wrangling the boxing official orders the fight to go on, to the great joy of the crowd and the great sorrow of Jack Martin. When this fight first started, the mob was with Martin almost to a man, but in the last round, when he butted, ripped, heeled, and fouled me in every way known to the game, they are on their chairs bellering for me to knock him out.

The end came one minute and twenty seconds after the bell for the fifth round. I come out to finish this bird, but run into a wild right which like to upset me. We clinched. I shot a hard right through a opening and Martin reeled back like a drunken man. "He's going!" howls the mob. A left hook under the heart dropped him to one knee. He was too groggy to take a count and got up at "four." I took my time and measured him with a light left. His head come up, and I threw a right flush to his jaw, sending him down and out.

Thus endeth Jack Martin.

ROUND ELEVEN

WHEN GALE AND HURRICANE MEET

ONCE upon a time there was a fellow which wrote slews of poetry and bounded around rejoicing in the tasty name of Jean La Fontaine. Among the many rare gems which rolled off the end of his busy pen was the following wise crack,

"Nothing is so oppressive as a secret!"

Jean said it. The more us human beings is told to keep something quiet, the more we want to tell the world about it. You know yourself that the best way to put a secret in general circulation is to whisper it to somebody with the request, "Don't breathe a word of this to a soul!" The next day everybody but Little Red Riding Hood knows all about it and there's no use of you getting sore, because if it was a secret, why did *you* tell anybody in the first place?

Well, *I* am about to tell a secret which has been nestling in my manly bosom for quite a while. Me and Hurricane Ryan both swore we would never under no circumstances mention a word of this without the other's consent, but Hurricane has released me from

my oath. Hurricane Ryan ain't heavyweight champion no more so he don't care, yet that night in Mr. Brock's garage—but I guess I better tell it all and be done with it!

After I stopped Jack Martin, I again found I had practically fought myself out of a job. The only boys left in the light-heavyweight division that I ain't already slapped for a goal is boloneys that don't know a straight left from the timekeeper. A bout between me and the entire lot of these babies wouldn't draw sixty-two cents to the box office if they was allowed to come in with bats in their hands, so the promoters lay off me. This tickles Judy, which is still crazy to see me get out of the game and settle down as a solid business man, but it burns *me* up, because what's the use of being a champion if you can't work at it? Instead of being worth a possible half million to me, my title don't mean nothing, on the account I get no chance to perform.

Like Alexander the Great, my favorite character out of the big, thick Ancient History I got, I crave more worlds to conquer. So thinking matters over, I make up my mind that if I can't get no light-heavies in there with me I'll fight a heavy weight and be done with it. But I got no desire to try wading through a lot of these two-hundred-pound clowns, any one of which might lean their weight on me in a clinch and make me round-shouldered. I want the heavyweight champion, or nobody!

So I startle my playmates, the sport writers and even Nate, by quietly slipping over to the New York news-

paper offices and challenging Hurricane Ryan, world's heavyweight champion, to a fracas with his crown at stake. As I hold the title in the light-heavyweight division, I figure a battle between two champions should draw like a poultice.

My challenge is printed in the morning papers and the evening editions comes out with Hurricane Ryan's answer through his pilot, Curley Oliver, who just laughs me off. He claims Hurricane Ryan is ready and willing to defend his title against a legitimate contender at all times, but he's got no desire to spank babies. The big stiff. Oliver calls attention to the fact that Hurricane Ryan is almost thirty pounds heavier and four inches taller than me and has a equally big advantage in every important measurement of a fighter. In fact, says this dizzy nutmeg, the difference in size between me and Hurricane Ryan is about like the one between Dempsey and Carpentier and he don't think the public wants to see a duplicate of *that* "fight." Of course, that was all applesauce. What made the heavyweight champion unpartial to climbing through the ropes with me was my record—30 knockouts in 34 fights!

But the sport writers seems to side with Hurricane Ryan and with the exception of a few which like me personally, why, they refuse to take my challenge with a straight face. Even Nate and Kelly tells me to lay off Ryan.

"He's a little too big and burly for us, kid," says Nate. "And, another thing, Ryan is nobody's fool. I see him take Jim Lang a couple of months ago and

you know how fast this Lang is and how he can sock. Well, in the third round, Ryan hit Lang on the jaw so hard he throwed Lang's knee out of joint!"

"And Lang outweighed Ryan a good fifteen pounds!" chimes in Knockout Kelly. "If I was you, Gale, I'd forget about Hurricane Ryan, because in a scuffle with that baby the best you can look for is the worst of it, no foolin'! A champ is a chump to go out of his class into a heavier one for a fight. You know the old sayin', 'A good big man can always beat a good little man!' Outside of the time you and Frankie Jackson hit the mat together, you never been knocked cold in your life—why go out of your way to get kayoed?"

"Listen, you couple of crape hangers," I says. "I'm going to keep riding Hurricane Ryan till he agrees to battle me and if you think I'm kidding you're crazy! To hear you dumbells talk you'd think I was a push-over. You don't see none of 'em get up and *laugh* when I sock 'em, do you? Well, Ryan won't get up either. I seen him step a couple of times and I think he's a mark for a right hook—*my* right hook! After I smack him a couple of times him being bigger than me won't mean anything, because he'll be bent over to *my* size if not lower, and don't think he won't. Anyways, even if he knocks me kicking I'll still be light-heavyweight champ, because Ryan can't make the weight in that class. If I stop *him* I'll be world's heavyweight champion—I'll hold two titles, think of that!"

"Well," says Nate, "I think you're cuckoo myself, but I will say this much—when a Gale and a Hurricane

meet there should be some battle whilst it lasts!"

There was all of that.

While I am waiting for this big blah Ryan to give me a tumble, I spend considerable hours stalling around Ajariah Stubbs's drug store, as usual. To keep my brain limbered up for the time when I am going to startle the business world, I'm still dressing his windows and trying to arrange his stock in a attractive way for him. When *I* was back of his fountain I was always thinking up new drinks and giving them fancy names to attract the trade. The bozo he's got working for him now is just a dumbell which is simply interested in the fact that at six o'clock he gets off. He'll be a soda jerk all his life.

Anyways, one day I am back in the syrup room, pottering around with the different flavors and trying my hand at making a batch of chocolate syrup, a thing at which I was very fluent once upon a time, when a idea forces its way to the top of my head. I make up my mind I will invent a new drink—some unalcoholic thirst-quencher which will sweep the nation like jazz did. I figure that right then when even its worst enemies was beginning to take Prohibition seriously, there would be millions in a drink of some kind which would present the drinker with a mild kick without making him want to climb flagpoles and sing quartette by himself. A drink which would be relished by everybody in the family from baby to grandpop. Make it tasty, Volsteady, give it a catchy name, put it in a nobby bottle and sell it for, say, ten cents the copy and then just sit back and watch the dimes roll in!

The more I think about this, the more frantic I get to put it across and during the next few days I ruined most of old Ajariah's stock of syrups. Still, I ain't charging him nothing for my sales stimulating stunts, so it's even Stephen. I mixed chocolate, orange and coffee, strawberry with paregoric and rootbeer, throwed lemon, sweet spirits of niter and peach together, tried out a medley of pineapple, aromatic spirits of ammonia, pepsin bismuth and yeast—well, figure out some more combinations for yourself. I tried *everything!*

Judy, Knockout Kelly and Spence Brock, follow my experiments with the greatest of interest. They think I can do *anything* and that it's only a question of hours before I'll assemble a mixure of flavors into a fascinating drink which will make me as rich and famous as custard. But there's one jazzbo in Drew City which sneers at my efforts to lift myself out of the ruck and get somewheres. That's Rags Dempster. Rags pours sarcastical laughs on my attempts to invent a national drink and freely predicts a brilliant failure for me. Still I kept mixing and pouring and pouring and mixing. However, after either 85 or 250 combinations of syrups fails to do anything more startling than make me and my friends deadly sick, I give up my experiments for the time being. For one thing, I have got to wait till me and my volunteer tasters recovers. But I wasn't through with this idea yet by no means. I was going to compose a drink which would make the country wild and make me the same as a millionaire or die in the attempt!

About this time, Drew City was treated to the choice scandal of the year and for all I know the natives are talking about it yet. The New York papers comes in as usual one day on the 4:15 local and within a half a hour you couldn't of bought one in town for $54,000. The reason is a picture of Rags Dempster's father on the front page and above it in great, big, black letters it says the following:

POLICE SEEK J. RODNEY DEMPSTER

$7,000,000 EMBEZZLEMENT CHARGED!

Underneath is about nine columns explaining matters and there was plenty to explain about that seven million bucks! According to the newspapers, this mock turtle has dropped not only his own bankroll, and Dempster was worth important money, but he has ruined all the investors and his carpet factory by losing their jack in Wall Street. Seven million dollars —sweet mamma, the mere mention of that much sugar gives me a thrill! One thing I must say for old man Dempster, he was no petty larceny crook, was he?

Judge Tuckerman got hooked for $5,000 in the crash and poor old Ajariah Stubbs had $6,500 of his dough amputated through Mr. J. Rodney Dempster being a bum guesser on the stock market. The carpet mill shuts down for the second time in its history—this time, for good. About a thousand people is throwed out of work and if Rags's father ever does show up in Drew City again he won't have a China-

man's chance—they'll string him up from the nearest lamp-post sure as there's a Hindu in Hindustan!

Well, as the results of his male parent's nasty trick, Rags becomes about as popular in Drew City as a fan salesman would be at the North Pole. The fast bunch from the college, which was supposed to be his friends when he was circulating money with both hands, falls away from him like leaves off a tree in Autumn and the rest of the populace duck him the same as if he's a mad dog. Personally, I felt sorry for Rags, I did for a fact, in spite of him fouling me, time and time again. Just look at the jam he was in. His old man was in Europe, trying to hide from all the coppers in the world, he himself was flat broke and unequipped to earn any dough because he'd never had to work at nothing and even his imported car and the palace his family lived in was put up at auction so's the creditors can get a small piece of their money back.

I think Life itself is about the most interesting movie any of us will ever see—a rip roaring comedy drama with the plot changing all the time. We're stars in it today and supers tomorrow. Six years ago I was a bum and Rags was a millionaire's son. Now I got a chance at a million and Rags is the tramp. While I been battling my ways to fame and fortune, this bird has went steadily down. I don't particularly gloat over that, I think Rags got a tough break. Take any kid, give him a weekly drawing account like a bank president's, let him loaf through college and then suddenly take everything away from him and throw him out on his own. If the kid makes good after that, it's

his fault not yours, but *you* can take the credit if he goes wrong! When I think of Rags I don't regret having missed college as much as I used to regret it. Having to struggle for the mere right to live since I been eight years old has learned me more than I'd ever get in a class room. I'm used to bad breaks as well as good ones, and when things go all wrong I don't crumple up—I hop to it and make 'em all right. Nothing unexpected can ever happen to *me,* because I expect anything!

I meet Rags on the street one day some time after the news about his father reached Drew City. As a rule I used to pass by him without as much as a nod, because I liked him the same way I like to get run over, but now that he's down and out I didn't want to kick him, I wanted to help him up to his feet. Live and let live is my motto and it's as good a motto as any. So I stopped him and held out my hand.

"Rags," I says, "I certainly was sorry to hear about your father. I bet it's all a mistake and when he gets back from Europe he'll probably explain everything and there'll be nothing to it. In the meanwhile, let's forget our private war. If a few hundred—or more—will help you out till you hit your stride again, I'll be tickled to loan you whatever you think you need."

The look of surprise which come over his face when I stopped him gives way to a sneer. He looks me up and down like I'm something the cat dragged in on a rainy night and my outstretched hand could of been in Nicarauga as far as he's concerned.

"Mind your own affairs, will you?" he snarls, "What

my father does is no concern of yours. I need no assistance from an illiterate pugilist—I'll have more money within a year than you'll ever see! I already have something you'll *never* have—brains and breeding. Step aside and allow me to pass!"

I stepped aside—in fact, I stepped right out of his life. What else would you want me to do after that?

Well, my next imitation is to attend the auction of the Dempster mansion "and contents," as it says on the handbills which Constabule Watson tacks all over town. There's a big mob there, but most of 'em come to kid instead of bid. Rags's big English car finally goes under the hammer for a song. I forget the name of the song. Mrs. Willcox gets a swell set of wicker porch furniture for fifty bucks. Judy picked up a lot of potted plants for almost nothing and Knockout Kelly got a marble lawn bench for thirty-five fish that you couldn't duplicate in New York under a couple of hundred and which he needs like he needs two more ears. I stood apart and just watched the entertainment till Nate starts to ride me. He says this is the chance of a lifetime to get something for nothing and I am a sap for not sitting in. At this point the auctioneer and the sheriff has a conference. The auctioneer then raps for silence and when he gets something like it he gives the crowd a fearful bawling out. Among other compliments, he says they are the cheapest bunch of tightwads he ever met in his life and he's been in the game twenty years. As the result of their five and ten cent bidding on articles of "priceless value," he goes on, he has decided to stop auctioning off the furnishings one

by one. Instead, he will sell the house and its contents complete to the highest bidder, starting the thing at $50,000. One-third of the purchase price must be laid down at once, but the lucky buyer will be allowed ninety days on the balance.

"Well, come on, snap into it!" bawls the auctioneer. "Who bids fifty thousand?"

"I will!" I holler, without hardly realizing what I'm saying.

A hundred necks crane and twist to look at me and Nate views me with alarm.

"Fifty-one thousand!" comes a weak voice from the crowd.

"Fifty-five thousand!" I yell. I suppose I am crazy to do this, as the bridge jumper says, but why bother with thousand dollar bids and stay there all day?

My rival wilts.

"Anybody else?" shrieks the auctioneer. "Going at fifty-five thousand—an outrage, if they ever was one! Going at fifty-five thousand. Oh, what a crime! Do I hear fifty-six thousand? No? May Heaven forgive you,—*I* can't! Sold at fifty-five thousand dollars!"

And I am the owner of Rags Dempster's house.

What is the idea of a fellow like me sinking $55,000, in real estate you may say. The idea is that I have just about made up my mind that I am going to spend the rest of my days and nights, too, in Drew City and when I get wed and settled down, why, naturally enough I will want a house to live in. I couldn't duplicate the Dempster castle for three times what I paid for it and

should something happen to my marriage plans I figure I can always sell it at a profit. Then again, there is something fascinating to me about owning the home of a guy which once sneeringly offered me a twelve-dollar a week job in his father's carpet factory and which has been stabbing me in the back for six years. So all in all, I'm highly delighted with my purchase, and, strangely enough, Judy seems highly delighted, too.

I bring Nate and Knockout Kelly over to my handsome new home as my guests, but we make arrangements to take all our meals at Mrs. Willcox's. There ain't no cook in the world can even grease a pan with her and a fighter's food is as important to him as his hands. I give Nate and Kayo a beautiful suit of rooms on the top floor with their own private bath and the etc. and if you think they didn't like it, you're foolish. Kayo says my house would make Buckingham Palace look like a livery stable. He's especially hopped up about the piano down in the music room. My talented manager fingers a cruel ivory and Kayo throats a wicked song, so we was sure of ample entertainment on the cold rainy nights. Nate claims the piano is an upright, but Kayo says Nate's dizzy, because if the piano is upright what was it doing in the house of J. Rodney Dempster?

Both Judy and her mother come over and helped me rearrange this and that about the house at my urgent request. We made quite the few alterations, because strange as it may seem my ideas—on a lot of things—is a little bit different than old man Dempster's.

Judy got all excited over helping me fix up the house and as she's got elegant taste, why, in a couple of days it ain't just a house it's a beautiful *home*. It lacked just one thing to make it perfect—Judy! I followed her round from room to room, holding pictures and draperies for her to hang, moving chairs and tables where she tells me to put 'em and all that kind of thing, but believe me I ain't thinking about no interior decorating—I'm thinking about *her*. I think what a wonderful thing it would be if we were married and she was in my house to stay. She's up on a ladder fixing the velvet curtains between the dining room and the parlor and I just can't take my eyes off her. Why, if Judy Willcox was to stand beside Niagara Falls, nobody would give Niagara a tumble! I get a terrible kick just *looking* at this girl and that's a positive fact. Well, the more I look the more I wish and the more I wish the more I make up my mind I will ask her to wed me and be done with it! So I collect up all my courage, get up, cough a few times and begin.

"Judy," I says, in a kind of weak voice. "I would like to ask you a favor."

She turns around and smiles down at me, still holding the curtains.

"Anything, Gale," she says. "What is it?"

Standing there gazing into her clear blue eyes I decided to change the favor I intended to ask her, because I was always afraid that if I acted like I was dying of love she would give me the air. She often said herself that what she loathed was these mushy, lovelorn girls or boys. So like usual, I get double pneumonia of the

feet. I had plenty nerve in the ring, but in front of this vision I was as faint-hearted as a rabbit. So I jerked myself back to normalcy immediately.

"Eh—will you help me hang those ringside pictures of me in the parlor?" I says, for want of something to ask now that I have let the marriage proposition go by the board.

"Why, Gale!" says Judy, dropping the curtains in amazement. "Surely you wouldn't *dream* of putting those fearful fighting pictures in *that* room! And it's not a parlor, Gale, it's the drawing room."

"There's one room will be useless to *me,* then," I says. "For I can't draw a straight line. However, I don't see nothing wrong in hanging those fight pictures there, Judy. Some of them is scenes from my greatest battles. I'm kind of proud of 'em and I want my visitors to see 'em."

"Put them in your den, then," says Judy. "You just hold these curtains for me, Gale, and *I'll* do the decorating." She starts to hang the curtains again, but suddenly she turns to me and says with a odd smile, "Perhaps I'm taking too much for granted—after all, it is *your* home."

"I sure wish it was yours, too, Judy!" I busts out.

You should of saw how red her face gets before she turns away. She says nothing and I suppose I missed the chance of a lifetime by not asking her then and there can she see her way clear to marry me. But when I think if she ever says "No!" I will become a maniac, so why take the chance just yet of hearing that word which will poison me? So while I hung fire,

Judy gives the curtain a final pat and gets down from the ladder. She says she's got to hurry home and help her mother get dinner.

"Will you come back for a while after dinner and help me fix up that drawing room, Judy?" I says, in desperation.

"Of course, for a *little* while," she says, "if you want me to."

"If I *want* you to?" I says, advancing the bit closer. "Judy, I don't want you never to be away from me! I——"

"Gale—I—really, I must run, I'm late now!" she butts in.

But why does she look away from me and blush again? I don't know. I know she beat it and after she left, why, that swell drawing room with all the statues and classy furniture and rugs a yard thick, was just a empty empty room to *me!*

The best part of my new residence to me was the library and that's where I put in most of my time. It had every kind of book in the world in it and I just read the print off 'em, no fooling. Books is one thing I can't get enough of and I go on regular reading jags, you might say, taking my fill of fiction, history, essays, poetry, biography, science, etc. etc. and even etc. Of course, there's a whole lot of these books which is miles over my head, being filled with thoughts and words which is beyond me. So I hired what is known as a tooter. This was a nice old man by the name of Prof. Simms which used to be one of Judy's teachers at Drew City Prep, but in spite of all his knowledge he

had failed to learn how to keep from getting elderly and these cold-hearted birds at the prep school give him the air when he gets over the age limit. The poor old professor is a bit dazed by this treatment, as he ain't got a nickel and nowheres to turn for help, so I solved his problem and mine, too, by putting him on my payroll as my own private professor and having him come to my house to live.

About a month after I have settled down in my handsome mansion, I lost one of my guests through matrimony. That was no less than Knockout Kelly, which in spite of Nate's frantic objections hauls off and weds Mary Ballinger. Nate tried everything but poisoning the principals in a effort to stop these wedding bells from ringing out, because he knew it meant Kayo's permanent retirement as a box fighter. But Nate might as well of tried to stop the Atlantic Ocean from being wet. Mary and Kayo was wildly in love with each other and nothing else was of no importance to either of 'em. They are living in a swell little cottage which Kayo bought in Drew City and they got presents enough to more than furnish it. I was best man at the wedding and Judy was bridesmaid, and right then and there I made up my mind that the next marriage me and Judy graced with our presence we would be the parties of the first and second parts and not just innocent bystanders!

Well, as the time goes on my continual challenging of Hurricane Ryan for a battle over any distance he cares to name gets me the attention of nearly all the sport writers and they begin to ride him heavy. The

heavyweight champion is whiling away his idle hours in vaudeville at heavy wages and he don't seem anxious to defend his title against me or nobody else. However, when the old applause at the end of his turn begins to fall off as the result of his stalling tactics, why, he begins to realize he has got to make *some* warlike move if he wants to keep his popularity. So he suddenly agrees to fight me, out of a clear sky. This gets me, Nate and the promoters all excited, till we hear the amount Ryan demands for his guarantee. Then we are fit to be tied. All Hurricane Ryan wants for risking his crown in a tussle with me is a scant $200,000 and he might as well of asked for $200,000,000 and be done with it! The promoters' interest in the bout flickers out like a candle, even the biggest gamblers amongst them turning it down cold. They figure that with the fifty or sixty thousand they would have to give *me,* the purse would break the man who put the fight on, as the vast difference in size between me and Ryan would kill all chance of drawing the record crowd which would be necessary to make it pay. In desperation I agreed to take a percentage of the gate receipts, but Ryan wouldn't and matters come to a standstill once again. Then when I have give up all hope of ever meeting Hurricane Ryan in a ring or even at a dance, I get my chance. It was Spence Brock's father which come to the rescue like he often has before.

A few days after the newspapers has printed the ridiculous terms on which Hurricane Ryan will accept my challenge, Spence picks me up downtown in his car and asks me to run out to his house, as his father

wants to talk to me before he sails for a trip around the world on his yacht. On the ways out, Spence remarks that his father has made this excursion a half dozen times and he's looking forward to this one with about as much excitement as a aviator would look forward to a ride on a Ferris Wheel. He has got to get away from his business cares and the etc. every now and again at the request of his doctor, but this voyage is just a habit with him and that's all. Spence says he bets his father would give a gigantic slice of his bankroll for a new thrill. Well—he did!

When we get to his house, Mr. Brock wants to know when me and Hurricane Ryan is going to cease this newspaper battling and get down to business in a ring, as that's one scuffle he wants to view before he takes his boat ride. I told him I would take pleasure in furnishing him with the date of the setto if I only knew it myself, but from the way the heavyweight champion has been stalling me along, I personally think the fight will take place the same day roller skating on the ocean becomes the national sport. I says about the only way I'll ever get Hurricane Ryan into a ring with me will be if the battle-ground is the top of Mt. Everest, where there will be nobody around to see me knock him dead.

Mr. Brock smiles and then looks thoughtful for a minute.

"You think Ryan would be willing to fight you if there were no spectators present?" he asks me after a minute, giving me a short, odd look.

"Oh, he *might* take a chance, sir," I admits. "But a bout without spectators would be a bout without gate

receipts and a fellow who fights for nothing is not no fighter, sir—he's a maniac!"

This time Mr. Brock laughs outright, but there's a strange gleam in his eye and he still seems to be thinking seriously over the thing.

"But what if someone—some individual would finance such a fight, *provided he could be the only spectator?* Surely, Ryan wouldn't object to a single witness, would he?" he asks me.

"No, I don't think he'd squawk about a bare one fan seeing him knocked out, sir," I says, still in a kidding way, "but who in the name of Jersey City would spend more than a quarter of a million to see two fellows say it with boxing gloves?"

"*I* would!" he says, sitting forward in his chair and watching me close.

"You—you're joking, sir!" I gasp.

"You're wrong!" he says, very brisk. "I am not in the habit of joking about the expenditure of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars! For years I have been casting about for a substitute to take the place of this infernal ocean trip, which ceased to thrill me after the first one. I agree with my physicians that I need a tonic at about this time of the year, but we do not agree as to the proper ingredients of the tonic. By putting on this fight—an event I wouldn't miss seeing for worlds—I would save the time I'd waste on a round-the-world-trip, give you your chance to win the highest honors in your profession, and provide myself with a super-thrill! Imagine being the only witness to a battle between two champions—two of the greatest

boxers in the ring today fighting to a decisive result for *my* sole pleasure! Why, boy, Nero himself would have rushed joyously from his gladiators and chariot races to witness a spectacle like that!"

And I wish you could of saw how excited he is.

"But, what—how will you manage to—" I begin.

"Young man," he interrupts, "busy yourself with getting into proper condition for the fight of your career and leave the details to me! I will personally pay Hurricane Ryan the two hundred thousand he demands, but *you* must speculate with me. You say you are certain you can defeat the heavyweight champion under any conditions. I read a statement by you the other day to the effect that you would almost be willing to fight him for nothing. Very well, if you win I will pay you fifty thousand dollars—if you lose, you will get nothing but the thrashing for your pains! Come now, what do you say?"

"What are the other conditions, sir?" I says, kind of in a trance.

"There are but two conditions," says Mr. Brock. "One, that there will be no spectators at this bout but myself—the other, that the fight is not to be limited to any stipulated number of rounds. *It must be to a finish!*"

Just a glance at his grim face is all I need to show me he's in dead earnest. I got up and shook his hand. *I* was in dead earnest, too.

"Mr. Brock, I accept your offer with pleasure," I says. "And I will take even more pleasure in knocking Hurricane Ryan for a Peruvian demi-tasse, for your further enjoyment!"

I tell Nate about things that night and we nearly come to fistycuffs ourselves, on the account of his inability to believe me. When I finally convince him I'm on the up and up, why, he laughs himself sick. He claims that Mr. Brock's layout is the buffalo's beard and a fool and his money is soon divorced. So I says if Mr. Brock is such a fool, where did he *get* all them millions of his. That slows Nate to a walk.

I immediately start to condition myself for Ryan and as this is to be a finish fight, believe me I get some good heavies to ready me. This melee may go one round or one hundred and I don't want to risk not being able to take it. Mr. Brock's agents present the heavyweight champ and his pilot with their proposition and at first they can't see it with a telescope. They know who Mr. Brock is and that he's good for the guarantee, all right, but it's just become a habit with them to refuse to fight me and that's all there is to it. Fnally, Ryan's manager agrees to Mr. Brock's terms —provided he can add one of his own. *He insists that the result of the bout be kept a absolute secret, no matter which one of us wins!*

For awhile, neither me, Nate, or Mr. Brock can figure out what the big idea is. Then we all agree that the crafty manager of the world's heavyweight champion has sold himself the thought that maybe I may turn out to be a tougher egg than they figure. I may give Ryan a lot of trouble—I may even *take* him. They are leaving nothing to accident. *If I do win I can't claim the title, if everybody connected with the brawl is sworn to secrecy!*

Well, I'm convinced I'm Ryan's master at marbles, pinochle or box fighting. I'm also convinced he'll never fight me publicly, so I agree to his weird demand. The whole thing appeals to my imagination and fighting blood. If I lose, I'm sure of a terrible pasting without being paid a nickel for taking it. But if I *win,* I'll get fifty thousand fish and the priceless satisfaction of having whipped the heavyweight champion of the world in a fight to a finish!

While me and Hurricane Ryan is training for our little debate with all kinds of precautions being took to keep everything under cover, Rags Dempster begins to show signs of having staged a remarkable comeback, as far as money matters is concerned. He breaks out with a sporty new car, leases a swell old Colonial mansion in the richest part of Drew City, and generally begins strutting his stuff till the whole burg begins to whisper and wonder. This goes on for about a month, during which the wild parties at his house makes Rags the talk of the town—and it ain't the kind of talk I would prefer for myself, no fooling. Rags is the local mystery, which is solved when the coppers swoop down on his house one night in the midst of the usual festivities and collar him for, what do you think? Sssh—bootlegging!

Spence Brock meets me the day Rags's case comes up and he tells me he's heard they are going to sock it to Rags plenty. Not only to make a example of him as a bootlegger, but because two-thirds of the town hates Rags from his derby to his overshoes. His father's failure and the closing down of the carpet

mill is still open wounds and now that they got the son by the tail they are going to see at least justice done, if not more. Me and Spence is in Judge Tuckerman's court when the matter of Rags is reached. He has hired Lem Garfield, and Lem steps forward to plead for him. Lem got nowheres, for the first time since he's lawyered for a prisoner in the judge's court. When the judge hears the mere mention of the name "Dempster," why, he immediately remembers how he got stung by the carpet mill failure and he blew up like a powder mill. I doubt if he even heard the charge. He just gives Rags one terrible look over his cheaters and holds him for the grand jury.

So that was that.

Nothing much more happened till the night of the big fight, but plenty happened then! Mr. Brock had a regulation ring put up in the middle of his great big garage on the grounds of his estate and then he had the whole building fenced off by a ten-foot high boarding so's to keep out any peeping Toms. Had Drew City any idea of what was going to take place in Mr. Brock's garage that evening, you couldn't of kept the mob away with machine guns! There was a big cluster of high-powered electric lights over the ring itself, but only a few little dim ones around the rest of the place and with the whispered mutterings and hardly the sound of a footfall, instead of the usual roar of a fight-crazed mob, it sure was uncanny. It was more like going to be executed than going to box, and I almost felt like looking around the shadowy inside of the big garage for a scaffold. Hurricane

Ryan, getting into his ring togs at the far end of the building, seems to be more interested in giving Mr. Brock the once over than he is in me. Well, no wonder. A guy which is willing to spend two hundred and fifty thousand bucks to see a fight all by himself is something to look at!

Besides Mr. Brock, which makes up the entire audience, there is just me and Hurricane Ryan, our handlers—three for each of us—a referee, and a timekeeper. Eleven people in all at a battle for the heavyweight championship of the world and ten of the low-voiced eleven is connected with the mill as principals or officials. There's one for the book, now ain't it?

The total absence of the howling, kidding crowd and the general noisy excitement I had always heard before is the first thing which gets on my nerves. There's something about that deathly quiet—at Mr. Brock's strict orders—which just ain't right, that's all! The first time I ever fought in a ring the noise of the mob sent me a million miles up in the air and made broad jumpers out of all my nerves—now, because there ain't any noise at all I feel almost the same way! I can see the atmosphere's getting on Hurricane Ryan's nerves, too, from the way he licks his lips and keeps his eyes mostly on the floor as he sits in his corner. Now and then he shoots a quick glance over at me, probably to see how *I'm* taking things and I bet in another minute we might almost of got up and sympathized with each other over this awful quiet!

Well, there ain't much time wasted in fiddling

around, as there is no challengers to introduce from the ring and no flashlights to be took. Just before we shook hands I got a good look at Hurricane Ryan's waist line and the bulge of fat over his belt give me a lot of needed comfort. Hurricane looks like his idea of readying himself for this battle was to get himself a shave and a haircut. He figured me just another set-up, only that and nothing more.

Mr. Brock settles back in his ringside seat—the only seat there—with a fat cigar between his lips and a smile of perfect satisfaction on his face. He's set to see a battle that may break all records in the number of rounds fought and produce a new world's champion. It went just six rounds and as for producing a new world's champion, well——

From the first punch to the last, this fight was one which should go down in history with the Battle of the Marne, Gettysburg, Bunker Hill and Waterloo. Both me and Hurricane Ryan has one idea—to win with a single blow if possible. Therefore, every punch was meant for a haymaker. So sensational was the milling that it drove Mr. Brock to within two inches of insanity and it *was often necessary between rounds for the handlers to attend to him as well as me and Ryan* —holding the old ammonia under his nose and waving towels over him till he come back to life. At other times, he'd sit there licking his lips like one of them old time Roman emperors—tickled silly that he's seeing one of the goriest fights since Cain stopped Abel and that his jack has enabled him to put the shambles on for *his* enjoyment alone! Unfortunately, I didn't

have time to pay more attention to him. I was busy —with Hurricane Ryan.

At the opening bell, Ryan rushed me to the ropes and begin roughing it, using his terrible weight advantage to bull me around the ring while shooting in short lefts and rights at close quarters. Well, it's a cinch that my place is away from *this* kind of treatment and I get away by popping him with two stiff right uppercuts which his face told me shook him up. Then I turn my attentions to that roll of fat at his waistline, upon instructions from Nate, which he was warned not to repeat by the conscientious referee. I swung a left to the wind and followed that with a hard right to the same place without a return. A left chop to the ear started the Burgundy flowing freely and Ryan backs away looking worried. So far, I am making a show of this big stiff and this gets me a trifle too ambitious. I blocked a light left and tore in with a well meant right hook to the heart. The punch fell short and Ryan put Mr. Brock in a fainting condition by flooring me with a nasty left to the jaw. However, the blow was only a glancing one and after taking a count of seven I was up again, full of fight. Ryan missed a left uppercut and paid for his poor timing when I reached his sore ear with a overhand right. He grabbed me around the waist and we are clinched in mid-ring at the bell. Ryan's round, by the margin of that lucky knockdown.

Round two was a trifle slower, for the reasons that both me and Ryan had about made up our minds that a one-punch knockout would have to wait till we had

felt each other out more. Besides, we're both tired from the terrific pace in the first round. The heavyweight champ used a right swing almost entirely, while I relied on what Nate told me during the rest—a straight left and a right hook, mostly to the body, then back pedal and try to tire out Ryan by making him chase me. Ryan slipped and fell just before the gong, but was up in a instant. I didn't cop him, which I could when he was off balance, because that ain't the way I fight. Hurricane acknowledged this by grinning and touching gloves with me and that's what we was doing at the bell. This frame was even all around.

Ryan surprised me with a change of pace in the third round and only missed winning the fight then and there by a miracle. I was the miracle. He rushed me around the ring swinging both hands viciously and a terrific right to the head sent me spinning along the ropes, goofy and entering Queer Street. I got one glance at Nate's pale face and Mr. Brock jumping up and down and then I hit the canvas on my haunches from a short left hook to the button. I managed to stumble up in time to beat the count, only to run into a torrid left to the mouth that painted me a deep red and dropped me to my knees. Once more I arose before the fatal ten and this time I floundered into a life-saving clinch by pure dumb luck. I don't know what it's all about and I hung on till the referee dragged me away bodily. But that clinch had made a new man of me. Hurricane Ryan was tired and puffing like a porpoise from his own exertions during that flurry, while I had got my second wind and my

brain was clearing of the cobwebs put there by them two knockdowns. I stepped in close and dug both gloves into that pudgy, heaving stomach of his and you could hear him grunt in Betelgeuse. Then I swung a long overhand right to his face that covered both of us with Hurricane's gore. He tried a feeble straight left which I had no trouble ducking. He pawed at me blindly and I shot a straight right to his eye, cutting it to the bone. A wicked smash to the neck sent Ryan staggering around like a drunken man and made Mr. Brock act like one. The groggy heavyweight champ tried to dive into a clinch, but I had other plans for him. I set myself, took careful aim and threw my right at his chin. Down he goes like a poled ox for the first time in the fight, with a crash that sent up dust from the canvas. He barely got to his feet at nine and with a knockout win staring me in the face I throwed gloves at him till he must of thought it was raining leather!

Then came the accident which almost cost me the fight for the second time in that boisterous third round. Hurricane Ryan is against the ropes in his own corner, weaving back and forth like a hula dancer. I tossed a right at his jaw with everything I got behind it. As the punch starts, his head sways to one side and my glove swishes past and cracked against a ring post. I thought I had broke my hand in two, I did for a fact. The gong rings just then and when I run to my corner, Nate finds I have busted my right thumb, making my best hand practically useless!

Well, although I managed to keep Ryan from find-

ing out the shape my right is in, I took one proper pasting in the fourth and fifth rounds. With only one hand I could hit hard with, and that one which I had never before depended on as heavy artillery, I'm pretty badly handicapped. Only Ryan's poor condition and the cuffing I had handed him in the third frame saved me. He seems to get stronger towards the end of the fourth, but I kept him cautious by making a bluff of swinging my right every time he gets too ambitious. He didn't like that right of mine and he took no pains to hide it. I also bluffed him now and then with a shift—standing first with my left and then with my right hand extended. A left uppercut that hit me in the Adam's apple in the middle of the fifth like to choke me to death and near the bell I went down for a count of eight from two terrible smashes to the body. I tincanned around the ring from then on to the bell, which was a welcome chime to me. So far, Ryan had the first, fourth and fifth rounds by a good margin, with the second even and only the third in my favor. Yet I'm still the freshest of the two, having youth and perfect condition on my side.

Nate and I made up our minds that I was to stake everything on a flurry at the beginning of the sixth frame, leading with my right and standing the pain, in order to get a opening for a left to the jaw. The plan was to work heavy on Hurricane's scant hoard of wind and it worked to perfection. Right off the bat, Ryan smacked me with a right to the head. He looked surprised when I didn't fall and even more surprised when I sunk my left to the wrist in his body. I then

feinted with my right and again shot my left to his mid-section and Hurricane dropped to one knee. Ryan had a great deal of trouble this time getting to his feet and it was plain to even his handlers that he was through when he did struggle upright. Mr. Brock is jumping around like a madman, punching away at a imaginery fighter and too hoarse to yell. I looked Ryan over calmly, walked up to him and brought down his guard with a left to his heart. He sagged back on his heels, dropping his gloves slowly and I hooked the same left to the jaw. Ryan fell on his face, twitched and laid still. He was out four minutes and I have knocked the world's heavyweight champion cold!

Well, the minute the referee finished counting Ryan out, what does Mr. Brock do but haul off and faint dead away from excitement! Nate and Kayo Kelly leaps out of the ring and they had their work cut out for them bringing him around. No more than he opens his eyes when there's a commotion in the attic over the garage, and, here comes the laugh—*Spence, Judge Tuckerman and Lem Garfield tumble headlong down into the ring!* They been up there all the time and seen it all. Honest, I thought Mr. Brock would die of apoplexy. It slowly dawns on him that his scheme to be the only witness to his personally conducted fight has flopped and for the next few minutes he ain't fit to be at large! He raves and he rants and he stamps around, red in the face and shaking his firsts at his unwelcome guests. Judge Tuckerman and Lem Garfield looks longingly at the door, while Spence tries to quiet his father down with explanations of how he

smuggled them in because they was crazy to see me win. Spence had heard me and his father planning the thing and he just couldn't keep his mouth shut. At last, Mr. Brock happens to look around to where they are still working over Hurricane Ryan and he slowly cools off while a broad smile makes its appearance on his face. He slaps me on the back and grabs at my bloody gloves.

"By Gad, boy, you did it!" he hollers. "You whipped the world's heavyweight champion in as great a battle as I've seen in twenty-five years! I *knew* you'd win. I don't pick losers!"

That's about all, except when we get outside the garage, sneaking our way like burglars through the night to our cars, who do we bump into but Sam Howe, editor of the Drew City "Sentinel." Sam's got a flashlight, snooping around and when he sees us he throws it full in our faces with a cackle of joy.

"By Cæsar!" says Sam. "I knew there was suthin' big goin' on here! I knew that there fence wasn't built around the garage for nuthin'. Been a big fight, hey? Well, let's have the details for the 'Sentinel'!"

Right away Hurricane Ryan gets nervous and pulls me back of a tree.

"Remember our contract!" he whispers hoarsely in my ear. "We swore nobody would tell nobody who win the fight. You can't put *this* scrap in the papers!"

I remembered *that* part of it, all right, to my sorrow. But—a oath's a oath. I stepped up to Sam and motioned Hurricane to keep out of the range of his flashlight.

"Don't get all steamed up over nothing, Sam," I says, forcing a grin. "I just been working out for my next fight, that's all."

Sam squints at Hurricane.

"Workin' out with the heavyweight champeen?" snorts Sam. "Think I'm a fule? It's been a humdinger of a fight, I kin see by your faces. Lookit his nose!"

Then I get a real idea—I *do,* now and then.

"Don't make me laugh!" I snort. "That ain't the heavyweight champ no more than I'm Columbus. Look again and see for yourself!"

Hurricane Ryan's features is puffed and swelled till I bet he'd of had to be introduced to his own mother. I figure poor Sam has never seen nothing but a newspaper picture of him anyways. Like I hoped, Sam looks doubtful. He's made too many mistakes in the Drew City "Sentinel" to want to make another on purpose. Nobody likes to be laughed at, but professional comedians.

"You'll all swear that's not the heavyweight champeen of the world?" he says finally, pointing to Hurricane Ryan.

Well, that ain't a hard matter to do. I have just knocked Ryan out, so even if I ain't in a position to tell the world about it, I'm *morally* heavyweight champion myself, ain't I? Sure!

I nudge the others and we all raise our hands and solemnly swear. Hurricane Ryan looks at me, sees what's in my mind and with a grim smile he raises his right hand too!

A good loser at that, now wasn't he?

ROUND TWELVE

CRIME, WOMEN AND LONG

WHEN all is said and done there is really only two things which a box-fighter must have—a wallop and a heart. Speed, ring generalship and a mastery of hooks, feints and jabs is all great things to bring into the ring with you, but the ability to hit and the ability to take it is actual necessities in the life of a fighter. We've had many a champion with no other assets than these two, but there's been few title-holders which didn't possess both. Another thing, attempting to be a clever boxer has ruined many a ambitious boy with no talent at all for feinting and jabbing, but which might of *slammed* his way to a title by roundhouse swings alone. Like Battling Long done, for the example.

After I knock out Hurricane Ryan, Nate signs me to fight this Battling Long fifteen rounds to a decision in the land of Jersey City. I am guaranteed forty thousand gulden, with the privilege of taking forty-five per cent of the gross. Long has got to content himself with a paltry fifteen thousand flat and the only guarantee *he* gets is one from Nate that will serve him up the pasting of his life. Being light-heavyweight champion of the world, I think the man which can take me will be born the day the Gulf of Mexico turns into

grape juice. Thinking that way is what makes ex-champions. John L. Sullivan figured himself the clam's garters, wouldn't train for Corbett and was a mark for the slim, cool-headed Gentleman Jim. In turn, the handsome James gazed upon Bob Fitzimmons with contempt and Ruby Robert smacked him much colder than zero. Fitz thought Jefferies a laugh, but the boiler-manicuring cave man just grunted and removed Fritz from his crown. Jack Johnson giggled himself hysterical at Jess Willard's ponderous swings and clumsy rushes at Havana, till Jessica's driven cuckoo by Johnson's kidding in the clinches, knocked Lil Arthur for a row of Mongolian whipped cream containers. Willard, a champion, figured Dempsey a set-up. In fact, just before he climbed through the ropes for the shambles at Toledo, Jess remarked that he hoped he wouldn't have to beat Dempsey up so badly that the bout would kill boxing. And then—Oy, Yoi! Well, *I* thought this Battling Long was just another boloney and why go through a gruelling training grind for a boloney? What happened? This:

I have never give up the idea of becoming a liquid Edison by inventing a drink which will goal the world and while I'm getting in condition for Battling Long I can't seem to keep my mind on the manly art of assault and battery. The training grind is more monotonous than monotony itself. Up at six a. m., road work, punch the bag, pull the weights, throw the medicine ball, step a couple of rounds apiece with half a dozen sparring partners, shadow box, army setting up exercises, shower, rubdown, bed between eight-thirty

and nine. You do that day after day and week after week with a grouchy, cold-eyed manager holding a watch over you and see how long you can keep from going cuckoo!

One night I am laying awake in bed thinking over this and that and wondering just where I *will* wind up, when the idea of composing this drink begins hammering at my head again. I just can't get rid of this thought and go to sleep. Instead, I find myself turning over various combinations of flavors in my mind till finally I get so excited about the thing that although it's after midnight I jump up and dress and sneak quietly out of the house without disturbing nobody. If Nate knew I was prowling around at this hour of the morning with a important fight only a few weeks off he'd be fit to be tied! I'm bound for the syrup room of Ajariah Stubbs's drug store, because I got a sudden hunch that this night I'll concoct a beverage which will be drank around the world! I got a set of keys which Ajariah give me so's I could come and go whenever I pleased and I let myself in, clear off a table, set out test tubes, vials, jars of syrups and bottles of drugs, a mortar and pestle, etc., and get down to business.

Like before, the first dozen or more experiments results in nothing but punishment for my stomach. I am getting a little sleepy and a whole lot discouraged, when I take one more chance and mix up—well, let's say it was four flavors, two extracts and a harmless drug. The formula is on file at Washington now and I'd rather you'd see it there. Anyhow, I taste this combination without much hope that it's going to be

any more successful than the others I've tried, when lo and behold, as the Chinese says, it ain't been down a minute when a pleasant glow spreads all over me. I ain't sleepy no more, in fact, I'm so full of pep I'm satisfied that I could go out and ruin a *dozen* Battling Longs in the same ring! Thrilled to the core by the feeling that I'm standing on the brinks of a great discovery, I take a real good swallow of this stuff and let out a whoop of pure joy. I've done it at last—I have discovered a drink which will give the nation a kick without a headache! No habit-forming drugs, no alcohol, no artificial coloring, and yet it's got a wallop like dynamite. The only thing is, it's a trifle bitter, but I overcome that by adding a little simple syrup and then it's the cat's collar! When two glasses of this has rolled smoothly and deliciously past my pleasantly surprised tonsils, I realize that I have got a radium mine on my hands if this drink is properly advertised and exploited.

In the midst of my wild rejoicing I hear somebody rattling the knob of the back door. I think it's probably Ajariah and I rush to the door and flung it open, crazy to tell somebody what I've just did. Well, it ain't Ajariah, it's no less than a very sleepy looking Nate Shapiro and he greets me with a decidedly angry glare.

"What's the big idea?" he growls, pulling out his watch. "It's nearly three o'clock in the mornin', is this givin' *me* a square deal?"

"Giving *you* a square deal?" I says, a bit puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"What do *you* mean, what do I mean?" says Nate. "You ought to be in the midst of a nightmare in bed instead of fussin' around this trap at this hour of the mornin'! Now you'll be a dead man all day to-morrow and won't be able to work out. That ain't playin' the game with me, kid. If this Long slaps you from under your title, you won't get the money for your next fight and if *you* don't get the money, where do *I* get off? You shouldn't ought to be so selfish, Gale, you ought to remember that every time you take a lickin' it hurts *me!*"

"I'm sorry if it offends you when I get punched in the nose, Nate," I says. "But I think I can promise that will never happen no more after my little debate with Battling Long. Unless I am greatly mistaken, that will be my last fight!"

"Blah!" sneers Nate. "You're dizzy! I've heard that stuff from you before, but——"

"But *this* time it goes!" I butt in. "Nate, I have just fell into a thing which will make me a million bucks before I get through with it and if you don't think it will you're crazy!"

"Listen," says Nate, in open disgust. "If I didn't know different I'd swear you was a hop-head, no foolin'. You got more ideas than Burbank. First thing you know you'll get pinched for tryin' to get blood out of a stone or somethin'. What are you doin' in this joint, anyways?"

For answer I poured out a glass full of my newly invented drink and handed it to him. Nate sniffs it and eyes me suspiciously.

"Smells like it had authority," he says, with a grin. "What is it?"

"What do *you* care what is it?" I says. "Drink it and you'll have the honor of being the first one to ever taste it, outside of its inventor!"

Nate gives a grunt which don't commit him one way or the other, but he takes a inquisitive sip from the glass. I watch him like a mother watches her first baby learning to walk! Suppose he don't like it? Suppose this drink is a knockout only to *me* and the bunk to everybody else? Honest, I'm more nervous and anxious while Nate tastes that concoction than I was when I climbed through the ropes to fight Gunner Slade for the world's light-heavyweight championship. My whole future is wrapped up in that glass which the hard boiled Nate holds in his hand as far as that part of it goes, and why shouldn't I be nervous and anxious?

Well, I don't have long to wait for the returns. The first sip Nate takes opens his eyes. He takes a healthy swig, smacks his lips and then drains the glass.

"Wam!" he hollers. "Say—that's the turtle's bicycle! What is it?"

The sleepiness and the grouchiness has disappeared like magic!

"I ain't got no name for it yet," I says, tickled silly at the way it hit him. "I just this minute invented that drink, Nate—laugh *that* off!"

"Don't stand there arguin' with me," says Nate, holding out his empty glass. "Let's have another shot of that stuff, but don't let me catch *you* drinkin' none

of it—remember you're readyin' yourself for Battlin' Long. As a trainin' exercise, this egg stopped Kid Christopher at Philly last night in one round. It took you *four* to do the same trick. That's somethin' to think about, hey?"

"No," I says, "it ain't. I never felt better in my life and I'll lay this Long like a pavement! You're a swell manager—instead of telling me I can lick the wide, wide world you're always predicting I'm going to get knocked for a loop. It's a good thing I got plenty of this moral and don't have to look to *you* for none. It's as harmless as a day old infant. But I can't give you no more till I mix some up."

"Till *you* mix some up?" says Nate. "What's the idea?"

"I told you I *invented* this drink, didn't I, dumbell?" I says.

Nate sits on the end of the table and looks at me with awe and admiration.

"I thought you was kiddin'," he says. "I think you are yet, but if you ain't kiddin', you got a money maker here which will make the mint look like it's turnin' out biscuits."

"It's going to take plenty jack to properly launch this, Nate," I says, after a minute. "I'll have to go out and promote a company, probably, and sell stock and ——"

"I'll take ten thousand bucks worth of stock in it right now!" interrupts Nate, banging his fist on the table. "We'll canvass the town—no we won't either, we'll only let our pals in on this. Hey—mix up a

couple more drinks of that stuff and we'll dope a campaign right here and now which will raise enough pennies to set that drink before the public and make 'em cry for it!"

And we did and they did.

It was five in the morning when we let ourselves out of Ajariah Stubbs's drug store and sneaked home, tired and sleepy but drunk with enthusiasm.

"Kid," says Nate to me before we turned in for a couple hours' nap, "you're brighter than Jackie Coogan and that's a fact! But I suppose this drink you cooked up is goin' to be the end of our partnership. You'll make more money in less time with *this* punch than you will with the punch in your right hand. Then the next thing, you and Judy Willcox——"

"Will get wed,—if I'm lucky!" I finish for him.

"I hate to see that," says Nate, shaking his head. "I hate to see it. As it stands now, you and Judy is just a couple of good friends—you get married and you'll ruin all that. Marriage has busted up more friendships than anything else in the world!"

Then I chased him.

Well, late that same afternoon there is a important conference in the back of Stubbs's drug store. Judy, Ajariah, Spence Brock, Nate and Knockout Kelly is all gathered round me, drinking this thing I've invented and to say they're enthusiastic is a typical case of not telling the half of it. Ajariah, Spence, Nate and Kayo regard me with plain awe, but in Judy's expression there is something more than that—something which makes my heart hop around like—like—well, whatever

is in the habit of hopping around. We talk a lot about forming this company to put my drink on the market, about what we'll call it, how much we'll soak the thirsty public for a swallow of it and this, that and the other. Excitement reaches and passes fever heat and there's plenty demands for me to make a speech, but I am no W. Jennings Bryan on a rostrum and that's a fact. I'm satisfied that public speakers is born and not made, yet never the less I am going to take a course in orating along with my other studies, because now that I am set to be a big man in the business world I will doubtless have to bound around to banquets and the like making speeches and I don't want to act like a clown when I do.

The next day I am around to Stubbs's drug store earlier than I ever was when I had to be there to jerk soda in days of yore. As far as my coming brush with Battling Long is concerned I got no more interest in it than I am interested in who killed cock robin. What I *am* interested in is mixing up a batch of my beauteous beverage to have it all ready for the early trade in Ajariah's store so's to see how it gets across with the general public. No presidential candidate ever waited for the returns with half the interest with which *I* waited for 'em that day in the old drug store.

Well, long before noon my worst fears was realized —my drink was a howling success!

I stood back of that fountain with Ajariah and his lieutenant soda man and watched a fair to middling fountain trade jump in a few hours to a business which would make a guy peddling rain storms in a drought

look like rank failure. No matter what they asked for —pick-me-ups, headache removers, nerve steadiers or merely plain drinks—we invited 'em to try my new concoction and once they did that they just set there saying "Wow! What d'ye call that?" and shoving over their glasses and dimes for more. It was the greatest sale since the one Columbus took, no fooling!

When me and Ajariah bottled it and it sold faster than we could ram in the corks and turn it out with our home-made bottling machinery, I knew my days of experimenting with myself was over. This liquid gold mine I had stumbled on had overnight removed the uncertainty and that terrible worry and pain in the heart which, young or old, you can't escape if you're an incurable addict of the drug which put the world over—ambition. It took me a long time to find my game—a long time of trying this and that and taking many a nasty fall along with my few short ascensions. But it was all worth it, for look what I got now. I been down, but I GET UP and there's the secret of success in a nutshell. To add anything to that formula would be using rouge on a rose!

Well, now that the success of my drink is as certain as cold weather in Alaska, the next step is getting a name for it and forming a company to sell it. Like I do on all important questions, I consult Judy about this, but before we get down to business, why, she lays her sweet little hand on my arm. Her beautiful face is troubled and these pulse-thumping eyes of hers is a bit moist, what I mean.

"Gale," she says, "now that you have found your-

self at last and have a possible million awaiting you, are you going to—to leave Drew City?" And the anxious way she asks that sends my blood racing. There's no use talking, I might of done everything else twice or more, but personally, I only been in love once!

"No, Judy," I says, "I am not. You couldn't get me six inches away from this burg while—while *you're* in it! I——"

"That wasn't what I meant," she butts in quickly, flushing. "But it does seem to me that you have fought out your whole life problem here in Drew City—coming here penniless, without friends, vague as to your ambitions, now you are a member of the Board of Trade, respected and admired by everyone and—why, Gale, I really believe at this moment you are the biggest thing in the town! I do not mean you wouldn't have done as much in a large city, but, Gale, there are less temptations and more loyal friends in a small town and I know that has helped you. Perhaps I am selfish, but I love Drew City and I feel a sort of vicarious pride in the fact that you were developed here. I'd hate to see you go, now that the work of making you a successful man has been accomplished. But that of course is silly. You alone Gale were responsible for your success—your unswerving ambition and 'fighting blood,' as you phrase it, would have made you a success anywhere. I'm just a foolish girl, I know. You will be a man of affairs now and I suppose you'll feel cramped here. You're done a lot, Gale, a lot for yourself and a lot by example for the other boys here.

I—I wish I'd had something to do with your rise, instead of just the pleasure of watching it."

"You had plenty to do with it, Judy," I says, taking her hand. "If it hadn't been for you I never would of stayed here. You been a inspiration and—and one of the goals I been shooting at. I got no intention of leaving Drew City, now or ever. I mean something here, got my home and my standing here and here I stay till doomsday! This drink of mine will be manufactured right here and we'll deal out jobs to the local talent and not to no outside help. I'll give all my friends a chance to get in on the ground floor with stock in the company. Me, and everything connected with me, Judy, is going to be a strictly Drew City affair. Why as soon as I got my company floated and everything running smooth I'm even going to get married here!"

If she blushed before, you should of saw her face then.

"That's certainly fine, Gale," she says shyly. "And I wish you luck in—in all your ventures here. Have you thought of a name for your drink yet?"

"Absolutely!" I says. "The name thought of itself you might say. In fact, I think if I'd had the name before I'd of invented the drink long ago!"

"Now I *am* curious," smiles Judy. "What is it?"

"It's *Judy Punch!*" I hollers, for the name had come to me in a flash while she was talking. "I claim that name's the rabbit's velocipede and inside of six months it will be on every tongue in the nation!"

It was on every tongue in the nation inside of *three*

months. I bet you've ordered it time and time again yourself, hey, and ain't it a drink for your life?

Well, I wasted no time in getting Lem Garfield to draw up papers in legal style and the first thing I know I am incorporated as "Gale Galen, Inc." After trying twenty times without no luck at all to find out what the papers Lem drew up for me was all about I appointed him counsel for the company. The original stockholders was me, Ajariah Stubbs, Judge Tuckerman, Nate and Knockout Kelly. Besides my stock, I am to get a certain royalty on every bottle of "Judy Punch" sold and I am likewise president of the firm. This is what I call sitting pretty and I don't suppose nobody will give me no argument about that part of it.

However, when we cast up accounts after the organization of the company, the total amount of capital we have managed to excavate fails to give me a thrill. What I mean is, I realize I have got hold of something which don't want to be ruined by piker methods. "Judy Punch" wants to be manufactured and bottled on a heavy scale and we need a plant, machinery, a selling and promotion staff, and all this sort of thing, if my marvelous invention is going to mean anything. All this calls for important jack so I set forth after it like I set forth after anything else, with one idea fixed in my mind. The one idea is—*get it!*

I was afraid things had been breaking a little too smooth for me, so I can't say I was dumbfounded when the old fly in the ointment crops up. This was Rags Dempster. Rags had been duly tried and convicted of peddling the forbidden brew and the fine took every

nickel he had in the wide wide world. Queer, ain't it, that the drink Rags got mixed up with broke him and the drink *I* got mixed up with made me a fortune? Anyways, I run into him on the street shortly after he come out of the bootlegging thing, up against it and without a friend in Drew City. He stands in my way and greets me with a ugly snarl. Rags was drunk,—but with hate, not moonshine.

"Well, you squealer," he sneers. "How much did you get from the Revenue agents for informing on me?"

"Rags, you're crazy," I says, keeping my head. Why smack him down? I figure he's taking the long count now in more ways than one. "Even though you ain't exactly infatuated with me, you know I wouldn't do a thing like that. I ain't built that way. I'm light-heavyweight champion, you *never* had a glove on in your life. If I wanted to do you a real injury, I'd make you step with me here and now for that crack you just made!"

"Oh, no you wouldn't," he hisses, and shoves his right coat pocket forward. It's got a gun in it. I can see the outlines of a automatic as plain as day. "Oh, no you wouldn't," says Rags. "You make a step forward towards me and I'll blow you up. I'm dying to do it, anyways!"

"Rags," I says, "I won't cuff you because I'm sorry for you. You been your own worst enemy and evidently you're determined to make the feud with your self a finish battle. But if I *did* want to cuff you, Rags, that gun wouldn't stop me—remember that, in

case you get rosey with me again! Now lay off acting like a villain in the movies. You got people looking at you."

Rags glances sharply across the street and sees a little group of innocent bystanders rapidly gathering. The hand in his coat pocket relaxes, but his set face don't. Honest he glares at me with his beady eyes glittering till he looks more like a tiger than a human being.

"Galen," he says, in a hard voice, but it was steady enough, "I'll get you if it's the last thing I do! If I *do* kill you, I'd just as soon it *would* be the last thing. I'd die happy!"

Sounds like a play, don't it? I know. That's what *I* thought, too. I think I grinned—I couldn't help it, Rags sounded so dramatic. I didn't think he'd ever have the nerve to shoot a rabbit, judging from his past performances. That just shows there's plenty of things I don't know.

Well, I got Mr. Brock interested in the possibilities of "Judy Punch" and he came through for me as he has scores of times before. Came through to the extent of loaning me enough jack to begin the manufacture of my drink the way it should be manufactured and he took my notes for the loan. He didn't want nothing but my word, but I didn't want to start in business without doing everything in a regular business-like manner. I never was strong on accepting favors, not because I hate myself, but because I hate to think I can't stand on my own feet and operate from that point.

Then I begin looking around Drew City for a plant suitable to my needs. I find it in a place which seems to of been picked not by me but by Fate. It's no less than the deserted carpet factory, once owned by Rags Dempster's father. The machinery had been sold to satisfy the creditors and it's just one wonderful place for us to turn out "Judy Punch" in large and luscious quantities. One long lingering look all around it was enough for me—and I guess the fact of that factory being just what it was kind of helped me to make up my mind, too. I bought it, took down the big sign reading "Dempster & Company" which had stood there for years and put up one in its place which says, "Gale Galen, Inc."

I imagine the proudest second of my life was when I stood across the street from the factory and gazed fondly at my nice new sign. Just think, I now own the place where Rags once sneeringly offered me a job as a laborer in order to make me look small before Judy. When Rags and me started *he* had wealth and education at his disposal, I had poverty and ignorance. Now I had wealth and at least a working education, while Rags had merely the education. The difference that really counted though, was in the stuff which flowed through our veins. Dempster's was water, mine was blood—fighting blood! What I've done is no more than what anybody with courage can do and a great deal less than many have done. So go on, do your stuff, sock the world whenever you can, take it when you have to and—you'll be surprised!

Well, having sorrowfully took me at my word that

my fight with Battling Long would be my last, Nate was now busy trying to develop Two-Punch Jackson, the heavyweight, into a champion. He likewise had Tommy O'Ryan, the good middleweight, under his wing and figured on bounding over to Europe with 'em and fighting 'em against the best English and French boys in their class. The cables had been kind to Nate in the matter of offers, so all in all it looked like bon voyage. Knockout Kelly bought out my interest and Nate's in the Judith Moving picture theatre, his wife going back to her old job at the ticket window, where she was a decided asset and she'd be a decided asset to any theatre, don't think she wouldn't. The future looked too busy for both me and Nate for us to keep a hand in a small town picture theatre and we was glad to cash in and step out. On the other hand, it was a perfect spot for Kayo. Spence Brock suddenly pleasantly surprised both me and his father by declaring himself crazy to go to work at something connected with the putting across of "Judy Punch." So I sent him to New York to open a branch office for us there and organize a sales crew. Even though Spence is a multi-millionaire's son, that didn't prevent me from telling him this was his chance to make good!

Then come the tragedy which gloomed us all up for a while—a terrible unexpected shock which solved a old problem for me, but I can't truthfully say I liked the way that problem was solved. It was a bit too terrible to gloat about, it was for a fact. Like all things which stun you at the time, it's soon told. It happened like this: Besides superintending the manu-

facture of "Judy Punch," I was spending a lot of time doping advertising copy and framing what I hoped was interest-building letters to the jobbers and dealers. Judy was worth her weight in platinum in helping me do this, as she's got some wonderful ideas and a business head as wise as it's pretty, which is saying several mouthfuls. Well, we'd been doing most of this work in the office, of our plant, and this particular night we are working there late trying to smooth out a idea which had all the earmarks of being a wow when we got it properly set. It came out later at the inquest that it must of been about ten o'clock when this thing happened. They couldn't prove the time by either me or Judy, as we was both too upset and sick with the tragedy of the whole business. Anyhow, I was just helping Judy on with her coat where there was a sharp report, the crash and jingle of broken glass in the window opening into the factory and a wicked thud in the opposite wall. I felt a stinging in the top of my left ear and when I felt it my hand came away sticky and red. Judy give a little scream and run to me as I staggered back. I wasn't hurt, but the sudden sensation that somebody had tried to cook me in cold blood made me a bit ill in the region of the belt. I can't say I've had that happen to me every day.

"Stay here, Judy—I'll get that guy!" I says quickly, pushing her behind a big book case out of harm's way.

"Gale—don't—you'll be killed!" she gasps, white as the teeth in a toothpowder ad.

"Well I'll be killed if I stay here, too," I says, forc-

F. B. O. Photoplay Series. *"Fighting Blood."*

FAILURE FACED THE MAN WHO HAD NEVER KNOWN DEFEAT.

ing a sickly grin. "If I go out maybe I can argue my boy friend out of it."

But I didn't feel that funny at all.

I sneaked out the door and in the dim night light over the stairs I see a figure, all scrunched down, but trying to see what he rung up with his shot at the office. So I crawled over on my hands and knees, making a wide circle and coming up in the rear of this unknown yellow killer. He heard me just as I jumped, but I was too shifty for him and grabbed the wrist of the hand which held the gun before he could fire again. He twisted and squirmed like a wildcat and I jolted him with a short right to the jaw. As his head flew up and he dropped to his knees I saw it was Rags Dempster.

While I stood there dumbfounded and my next move made uncertain by surprise and disgust, Rags got to his feet and faced me, his features twisted with hate, still holding the gun. He aimed it at me point-blank and he wasn't four feet away when he pulled the trigger. "Goodnight!" I tell myself and stiffen for the plunk of a bullet socking into my body. But poor Rags—and on account of what happened within a few minutes I say poor Rags even though he tried to kill me—poor Rags was out of luck. The trigger clicked harmlessly and the next instant I floored him. He rolled over and over, getting to his feet like a cat and staggered for the stairway. He's still got the gun and I set sail after him. Up the stairs on the dead run comes Garth Hinkle, our nightwatchman, who's heard the shot and the scuffle on the office floor. He tried to

stop Rags and Rags knocks him flat with the butt of the gun. As Garth fell he yanked out his own gun and fired one shot from the ground. He couldn't of aimed, he didn't have time, but Rags dropped like a stone and he *was* a stone when we reached him—stone dead!

The poor, poor kid—with all he done to me, Rags was unfortunate from birth in a great many ways. His mind was shaped all wrong and when the breaks went against him he didn't have the stuff to fight back fair and you can't foul Fate. Yet that was a tough way to go out. It broke us all up for quite a while.

Well, when the day of my fight with Battling Long arrived it was almost a unexpected visitor. Putting "Judy Punch" on the market had gave me little time for training and I was miles from being in perfect condition when I climbed through the ropes to defend my title for the last time. This ain't a alibi—Long is a good boy, a sweet puncher and a fair fighter. For all I know, he might of been able to take me the best day I ever seen and as I *don't* know, why, let's say maybe he would of and give him the credit. He's still in the fight game and I ain't. I got a trick worth two of that now!

Before this melee had gone a round I had a sensation I never had before while I was box-fighting. *I knew I was going to be trimmed!* The thought even struck me that I might be knocked cold, for the first time since I pulled on a padded glove and stepped into the squared circle under the blinding lights to do my stuff. My wind was all shot to pieces and I run to my corner at the bell, blowing like a porpoise and my body a mass

of red welts from the jarring blows of Battling Long, who fighting a cool, heady fight, knew where I couldn't take them *that* night no matter how punch-proof I used to be. Long's handlers was almost hysterical with joy and acted like they couldn't believe their eyes when he walked to his stool. Their wildest dreams looked about to come true and they wasn't a bit backward in showing how they felt about it. But Long, with a world's title staring him in the face, never blinked a eye. He just sit there cold, grim faced, tight-lipped and cruel, but only cruel because you see that was his business. He hadn't a thing against me personally, but plenty against me walking out of that ring still holding the title. Well, that's the game.

After that for ten barbarous rounds, Long made a punching bag out of me. He took no reckless chances of rushing to land a quick knockout—he was fighting a champion and a champion is dangerous till he's counted out, that's what makes him a champ. So Long fought his battle at long range, taking advantage of my poor timing to chop me to pieces with a murderous left and jar me with occasional terrific rights to the body. Even though I was steadily on the receiving end of those wallops I couldn't help but admire his plan of battle. My hat's off to a artist in any line, and Battling Long knew his business!

In the eleventh round, Nate begged me to let him toss in the sponge and save me from taking needless punishment. He knew I was through and for that matter it was no secret to me, but I've never had no fights stopped to save me before and I wasn't going

to begin then. Besides that's a Hades of a way for a champion to lose, now ain't it? I have slapped many a boy stiff myself and if it was my turn now, why, I was in there to take it.

A punch by punch description of that battle would be monotonous and there was no pleasant memories connected with it for me. In the twelfth and thirteenth Long battered me from pillar to post, putting more stuff on his swings, now that I was a set-up. Some of the customers even begin to walk out on us because the result looked like a foregone conclusion. I remember dully wondering how it would feel to get knocked stiff, a thing that never had happened to me before. Then I'd get desperate and lash out with both hands, once landing a wicked right on Long's face that sent my friends howling and jumping on the chairs. But they was just flurries and Long soon learned to figure just when I was going to start 'em and he'd cover up and weather the storm. I guess I took almost as much punishment in my last battle as I did in my entire career up to then. I was down for short counts twice in the fourth, twice in the fifth, once in the seventh, three times in the eleventh, once again in the thirteenth—a total of nine times in a fifteen-round scuffle. Plenty!

In the fourteenth round, Long, driven wild by his inability to stop me, opened up and began swinging 'em from the next block. This was my only chance and I went at it like a collie after a bone. The instant I felt him tiring from his own efforts I gathered the last remaining strength I had left and tied in to make

a grandstand finish. A right hook to the heart staggered Long a little after the bell and I followed that with a hard left to the head that spun him against the ropes and made the home-going spectators stop in the exits and scream their heads off. The highly amazed Long was then short with a right uppercut and I dropped him to one knee with the same punch in return. Long took "Six" and come up with murder in his eye. He swung hard for both head and body and soon had me covering up. That was the end of my spurt. The bell found me hanging on for my life.

In the fifteenth and last frame I took a cuffing which would of satisfied my worst enemy, I did for a fact! I don't know what kept me upright. Long bombarded me with terrible lefts and rights to body and jaw, hanging me over the ropes once under a hurricane of blows which actually held me up they were coming so fast. I made as many returns as I could, but I was getting weaker and weaker and the bell was the most welcome sound I heard that evening. Two seconds more and I'd of been knocked as cold as a coroner's case.

So the decision and the light-heavyweight championship of the world passed on to Battling Long on points. When you read that sort of a decision in the newspapers you get the idea that the fight was mere "boxing exhibition" and not much to look at. If you had seen me after that brawl you would never get the idea again.

A wild admirer of mine to the last, Mr. Brock comes plunging through the mob up to my corner where Nate and Kayo Kelly is trying to bring me back to life.

He shouts that I was robbed of the decision and should of got no worse than a draw. But that wasn't so and I told him it wasn't.

"No sir!" I says, shaking my weary head. "I wasn't robbed. I got a square deal. Long would of knocked me kicking in another round. He's a good tough boy and I hope he holds the title as long as I did."

When I was able I walked over to Long's corner where he's surrounded by a mob of guys eager to get even a nod from him. He's the new king and I'm forgotten. Such is life in the prize ring—or in any other ring. When Nate has cleared a way for me, I shook the new champion's hand and wished him luck, remarking that I had sent many a boy home in the shape I'm in myself and now I can sympathize with them more fully. Battling Long just grins a happy grin. He's beyond speech and I don't blame him. I know the feeling. That title is worth around fifty thousand a fight, but—*I* got a million to shoot at!

Spence mobbed me in the dressing room with the cheering news that "Judy Punch" has took New York by storm and he and his merry men has orders which will work our factory to capacity. He tells me my future is assured and asks me what in the name of Heaven is the matter with my right eye. I says I have been in a fight.

Then I heard Judy's voice and her knock at the door. I throwed around my shoulders the bathrobe she give me on my nineteenth birthday, and which I have never went into a ring without since. Then I give Spence the air.

"Oh, Gale," says Judy. "I'm so glad about our—your—about 'Judy Punch' and so sorry you were hurt so badly and——"

She's all excited. I ain't.

"Listen," I butt in. "I have stalled around for six years trying to get up enough nerve to ask you to wed me, Judy. I got everything I want but you and I'd give everything I got to get you! Just what do I have to do to make you marry me?"

"Well," whispers Judy, turning away shyly, her face a four alarm fire, "For one thing—you—you might *ask* me!"

"Will you, Judy?" I gasped.

"Yes, Gale I will!" she nods and from the depths of my shoulder she adds in a kind of muffled voice, "I think I would have at any time since you first come to mother's boarding house!"

"Much obliged," I says. "Now . . . Oh . . . Judy . . .!" And day by day in every way we're getting better and better!

THE END

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